

THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

A military study

J. F. Lazenby

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THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

The range and extent of the Peloponnesian War of the fifth century BC has led to it being described as a 'world war' in miniature. With the struggle between Athens and Sparta at its core, the twenty-seven-year conflict drew in states from all points of the compass: from Byzantium in the north, Crete in the south, Asia Minor in the east and Sicily in the west.

Since Thucydides described the war as 'the greatest disturbance to befall the Greeks', numerous studies have been made of individual episodes and topics. This authoritative work is the first single-volume study of the entire war to be published in over seventy-five years. Lazenby avoids the tendency of allowing historiography to obscure analysis, and while paying due attention to detail, also looks at the fundamental questions of warfare raised by the conflict.

Within a narrative framework, Lazenby concentrates on the fighting itself, and examines the way in which both strategy and tactics developed as the conflict spread. Not afraid to challenge accepted views, he assesses the war as a military, rather than a political, endeavour, evaluating issues such as the advantages and limitations of sea power. A readable and clear survey, this text offers a balanced discussion of controversial themes, and will appeal to ancient historians, classicists and all those who are interested in military history.

John Lazenby is Emeritus Professor of Ancient History at Newcastle University.

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A military study

J. F. Lazenby

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TO ELLIE,

who, having been found at the age of two
apparently reading a book on naval history,
might one day read this

CONTENTS

<i>List of maps</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xv
<i>Note on spelling and transliteration</i>	xvii
1 Background	1
2 Causes	16
3 Stalemate	31
4 Interlude	49
5 Athens ascendant	67
6 Sparta resurgent	83
7 Phoney peace	106
8 Sicilian adventure	131
9 Disaster in Sicily	149
10 A different kind of war	170
11 War in the north	195
12 Rearguard action	217

CONTENTS

13	Endgame	237
14	Conclusions	251
	<i>Appendix – the sources</i>	258
	<i>Notes</i>	260
	<i>Bibliography</i>	293
	<i>Index</i>	296

MAPS

<i>Map 1</i>	Greece and the Aegean	1
<i>Map 2</i>	Central Greece	60
<i>Map 3</i>	Amphilochia	63
<i>Map 4</i>	Pylos and Sphakteria	68
<i>Map 5</i>	Thrace and Macedonia	92
<i>Map 6</i>	Amphipolis	102
<i>Map 7</i>	Mantineia: terrain	119
<i>Map 8</i>	Mantineia: Spartan manoeuvres	124
<i>Map 9</i>	Sicily and the toe of Italy	137
<i>Map 10</i>	Syracuse	147
<i>Map 11</i>	Western Asia Minor	175
<i>Map 12</i>	The Hellespont and Propontis (Sea of Marmara)	195
<i>Map 13</i>	Kyzikos	204
<i>Map 14</i>	Arginousai	231

PREFACE

Soon after I graduated, I was invited to supper by Tony Andrewes. The only other guest was A. W. Gomme, and I suppose the seed of this book was planted then, though it has taken a long time to come to fruition. The commentary on Thucydides they wrote with K. J. Dover remains an indispensable tool for anyone studying the Peloponnesian War, and more recently the commentaries of Peter Rhodes and Simon Hornblower, whose friendship I am lucky to enjoy, have added to our understanding. The latter in particular acted as adviser to my publishers, and his comments were both encouraging and helpful.

All students of the war also owe a debt of gratitude to Donald Kagan's monumental, four-volume study. My approach is somewhat different, partly because within a single volume I had to leave much out, partly because I am dubious, for example, about some of his more speculative views on the political situations in Athens, Sparta and elsewhere. But where I differ from him, I do so with trepidation.

My own approach may seem too narrow. I can only say that I am aware that war cannot be entirely divorced from politics and economics, and that much recent work has been devoted to literary aspects of Thucydides' work. But, considerations of length apart, I am happier with military matters, and I also felt that Thucydides' contribution to our understanding of classical warfare has perhaps not been as fully appreciated as it should be.

I think it was G. R. Elton who once remarked, in a radio broadcast, that the first thing to do on approaching a historian is to listen for the sound of buzzing. I have as many bees in my bonnet as the next person, but to two in particular I will freely admit. The first is that I think the Spartans are too harshly treated in much modern writing on ancient Greek history. In the case of the Peloponnesian War, it seems that, just as the French can hardly accept that Napoleon was beaten at Waterloo, so modern scholars can hardly bear the fact that the Spartans defeated the Athenians. I hope to go some way towards redressing the balance.

Second, and more importantly, I have long believed that many studies of ancient warfare are bedevilled by a failure to appreciate that it was technologically very different from modern warfare. It is perfectly acceptable to look for modern parallels – I do it myself – but one must not get into the habit of thinking that

PREFACE

the recent conflict in Iraq, for example, is the same as the Athenian invasion of Sicily only with guns and aircraft. Basically the difference is between an amateur approach to warfare and a professional one. I hope that this book will help to make that clear.

Years of travelling and working in Greece left me with an abiding love of the country and its people, and, I think, added to my understanding of its classical history. The Greek love of argument goes far to explain the birth of democracy, for example, and their pride of place, as well as the nature of their country, the kaleidoscope of its classical political geography. In my previous book, *The Defence of Greece*, I looked at the war in which the ancient Greeks showed what they could do, against vastly more powerful enemies, if enough of them were prepared to sink their differences. In this one I examine the longest and most catastrophic of their internal quarrels. It is safe to say that after it the Greek world was never quite the same again, and within the lifetime of a single, long-lived man like Isokrates it had been more or less forcibly unified under Macedonia. That is the tragedy of the war.

I have to thank my grandchildren – especially the dedicatee – for emulating their parents' forbearance in keeping out of my way when I was writing this. Above all, I have, as usual, to thank my wife. Not only does she continue to bear, with at least outward equanimity, my very different interests, but, among other things, patiently taught me how to use her Apple Mac when my Amstrad finally failed me, and helped me with the index.

Finally, I would like to thank successive assistant editors at Routledge who have shown patience and understanding at a difficult time, and encouraged me to persevere.

J. F. Lazenby
Newcastle upon Tyne, April 2003

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AC</i>	<i>L'Antiquité classique</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Athenaiôn politeia</i> (Constitution of the Athenians)
<i>ATL</i>	B. Meritt, H.T. Wade-Gery and H. McGregor, <i>The Athenian Tribute Lists</i> , 4 vols (Cambridge, Mass., 1939–53)
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
Beloch, GG	K. J. Beloch, <i>Griechische Geschichte</i> (second edition; Strasbourg, and Berlin and Leipzig, 1912–27)
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>BSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
Busolt, GG	G. Busolt, <i>Griechische Geschichte</i> , 3 vols (Gotha, 1893–1904)
<i>CA</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>CAH</i> ¹ v	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i> (first edition), vol. v (Cambridge, 1927)
<i>CAH</i> ² v	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i> (second edition), vol. v (Cambridge, 1992)
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>CSCA</i>	<i>California Studies in Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>DS</i>	Diodoros
<i>FGH</i>	F. Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , 15 vols (Berlin, 1923–30; Leipzig, 1940–58)
Fornara	Charles W. Fornara, <i>Translated Documents. Archaic times to the End of the Peloponnesian War</i> (second edition; Cambridge, 1983)
Frontinus, <i>Strat.</i>	Frontinus, <i>Strategemata</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HCT</i>	A. W. Gomme, K. J. Dover and A. Andrewes, <i>A Historical Commentary on Thucydides</i> , 5 vols (Oxford, 1959–81)

ABBREVIATIONS

Hdt.	Herodotos
<i>Hell. Ox.</i>	<i>Hellenika Oxyrhynchia</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
Isokrates, <i>Panath.</i>	Isokrates, <i>Panathenaïkos</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
LCM	<i>Liverpool Classical Monthly</i>
ML	Russell Meiggs and David Lewis (eds), <i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions</i> (Oxford, 1969)
Nepos, <i>Alc.</i>	Cornelius Nepos, <i>Alicibiades</i>
OCD ³	Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (eds), <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (third edition; Oxford, 1996)
Plato, <i>Charm.</i>	Plato, <i>Charmides</i>
Plato, <i>Symp.</i>	Plato, <i>Symposium</i>
Plut., <i>Alk.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Alkibiades</i>
Plut., <i>Kleom.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Kleomenes</i>
Plut., <i>Lyk.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Lykourgos</i>
Plut., <i>Lys.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Lysander</i>
Plut., <i>Nik.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Nikias</i>
Plut., <i>Pel.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Pelopidas</i>
Plut., <i>Per.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Perikles</i>
Pritchett, <i>GSAW</i>	W. Kendrick Pritchett, <i>The Greek State at War</i> , 5 vols (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1971–91)
Pritchett, <i>SAGT</i>	W. Kendrick Pritchett, <i>Studies in Ancient Greek Topography</i> , 7 vols (Berkeley and Amsterdam, 1965–91)
RE	<i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
<i>RhM</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
RIL	<i>Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo, classe di lettere, Scienze morali e storiche</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>Syll.</i> ³	W. Dittenburger, <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> (third edition), 4 vols (Leipzig, 1915–24)
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
Thuc.	Thucydides
Xen., <i>Anab.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i>
Xen., <i>Hell.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Hellenika</i>
Xen., <i>Hipparch.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Hipparchikos</i>
Xen., <i>LP</i>	Xenophon, <i>Lakedaimoniôn politeia</i> (Constitution of the Spartans)
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

NOTE ON THE SPELLING OF GREEK NAMES AND THE TRANSLITERATION OF GREEK

Greek names have traditionally been Latinized, so that ‘Herodotos’ becomes ‘Herodotus’ and ‘Perikles’ ‘Pericles’. I prefer straight transliteration in most cases, but I make no claim to complete consistency: even I cannot bring myself to spell ‘Thucydides’ ‘Thoukudides’. However, I always spell the same name in the same way.

For the benefit of those who cannot read Greek, I have used transliterations of other Greek words and phrases. Long ‘e’ (‘η’) appears as ‘ê’, and long ‘o’ (‘ω’) as ‘ô’. Iota subscripts are placed after the letter they subscribe, as they were by the classical Greeks. Thus ‘αἰ’ becomes ‘ai’, ‘ἦ’ ‘êi’ and ‘ὦ’ ‘ôi’. Rough breathings appear as ‘h’.

All translations are my own.

BACKGROUND

On a rainy, moonless night in the spring of 431, a force of a few more than 300 Thebans entered Plataia at about the time of ‘first sleep’ (2.2–3).¹ Twenty-seven years later, almost to the day (5.26.1–3), a starving Athens, blockaded by land and sea, was forced to accept Sparta’s terms. During those years, war raged the length and breadth of the Greek world, from Byzantion in the north to Crete in the south, and from Asia Minor in the east to Sicily in the west. Since at least the first century this conflict has been known as the ‘Peloponnesian War’, and only



Map 1 Greece and the Aegean

a pedant would now seek to call it something different.² It was also the subject of one of the greatest of all historical works, by the Athenian, Thucydides.³

In his first sentence, Thucydides defines his subject as ‘the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians’, and elsewhere (2.9) he lists the allies of the two sides. On the one were all the states of the Peloponnese except the Argives and the Achaians, though, of the latter, the people of Pellene supported the Spartans from the beginning, and the rest later (within three years, judging by 2.87.6); outside the Peloponnese, the Spartans also had the support of the Megarians, Boiotians (except the Plataians), Opountian Lokrians, Phokians and, from among the ancient Corinthian colonies in the west, the Ambrakiots, Leukadians and Anaktoria.

On the side of the Athenians, among mainland states, were ranged only the Plataians, the Messenians of Naupaktos, most of the Akarnanians, and, later, the Ozolian Lokrians (cf. 3.95.3). But their main strength lay in their far-flung empire in and around the Aegean, comprising the relatively independent islands of Chios and Lesbos, and the many other states Thucydides classes as ‘tribute-paying’ (*hypoteleis*: 2.9.4). In addition, they were supported by Zakynthos and Kerkyra (Corcyra, Corfu) in the west.

The core of the Spartan alliance was what is often called nowadays the ‘Peloponnesian League’, but which was known to contemporaries more simply and more suggestively as ‘the Lakedaimonians and their allies’.⁴ This probably had its origins in the mid-sixth century, and by the end of that century, Kleomenes, king of Sparta, is said to have gathered an army ‘from all the Peloponnese’ (Hdt. 5.74.1). The only Peloponnesians who consistently remained outside the Spartan alliance were the Argives, although most of the Achaians were apparently independent at the beginning of the war.

From Thucydides’ account of the debates in Sparta that led to war, and other things that he and other sources report, we can see that the Spartan alliance had no real existence except as an instrument whereby the Spartans could mobilize their allies. They held the initiative and could not be committed to a policy of which they disapproved. Moreover, if the alliance did go to war, its forces were led by Spartans and remained firmly under Spartan control. Thus, in our war, allies such as the Corinthians and Megarians took their complaints against the Athenians to Sparta in the first instance (1.67ff.), and it was only after the Spartans in assembly had voted that the Athenians had broken the treaty of 446 (1.87) that they summoned a meeting of their allies to secure their formal vote for war (1.119).

Conversely, however, Sparta’s allies could not be committed to a policy of which they disapproved. For example, although on this occasion the allies did approve, it appears from something Corinthian envoys at Athens are earlier said to have claimed (1.41.2, 43.1) that the Spartans wanted to go to war with the Athenians at the time of the revolt of Samos in 440, but that the Corinthians persuaded the allies not to back the proposal. Moreover, the Corinthians apart, Sparta’s allies now included the Boiotians, who had their own federal league, and

who provided a powerful counterweight to Spartan dominance of the Greek mainland. Relations between the Boiotians and the Spartans were always somewhat strained, depending on whether the former saw the Athenians or the Spartans as the greater threat. But from 457 to 447 they had been under Athenian control, and this probably meant that at this time they felt they had more to fear from the Athenians.

The Spartans tried to ensure that allies who were more susceptible to pressure had 'friendly' (usually oligarchic) governments (1.19), and occasionally used force to secure this, as in the case of Sikyon in 418 (5.81.2). But they normally left their allies more or less alone (even, to an extent, in foreign affairs), provided that their own interests were not endangered. In the winter of 423/2, for example, at a time of truce with Athens, they apparently did not interfere in the war between their two most important allies in Arcadia, Mantinea and Tegea (4.134.1). Nor is there any evidence that they maintained garrisons in allied cities, as the Athenians sometimes did, and, unlike them, they exacted no tribute (1.19). If the *stele* recording contributions from Sparta's allies (ML 67=Fornara 132) really does refer to the time of the Peloponnesian War, one has only to compare it with the so-called 'Athenian Tribute Lists' to see the difference. Apart from anything else, the Athenians did not see the need to list contributions of raisins from their allies, as the Spartans evidently did.⁵

Thucydides, indeed, has both King Archidamos of Sparta and Perikles single out the lack of financial reserves as a weakness of the Spartan side (1.80.4ff., 1.41.2ff.), a weakness which Sparta's Corinthian allies allegedly proposed to remedy by borrowing from the treasuries of Delphi and Olympia (1.121.3). In one respect it was clearly true that the Spartans' lack of financial reserves weakened their war effort. As we shall see, the Spartans could not defeat Athens until they were able to match her at sea, and if there was any borrowing from Delphi or Olympia, as a clause in the truce of 423/2 may suggest, it obviously did not amount to much.⁶ It was not until the destruction of the Athenian Sicilian expeditionary force gave the Spartans and their allies a hope of achieving naval supremacy that they galvanized themselves into trying to assemble an adequate fleet, and even then they came to rely heavily on Persian financial support.

Apart from the cost of building and maintaining warships, their crews had to be paid. Slaves were probably used more than has sometimes been said, but the majority of oarsmen were probably always free men, and the cost of paying even a single trireme's crew could rise to a talent (6,000 *drachmai*) a month (6.8.1).⁷ Although oarsmen who served on their own national ships would presumably remain loyal, it appears from various passages in Thucydides that most states hired rowers from elsewhere. Thus the Corinthians claim that, by using their own resources and funds borrowed from Delphi and Olympia, they will be able to lure away the foreign sailors in the Athenian navy by higher rates of pay, and Perikles' counter-claims (1.143.1–2) imply that the Corinthian one was at least partly true. He declares that the Athenians could match their enemies from their own citizens and the aliens resident in Athens, and that they had more and better

helmsmen and other crew-members than all the rest of Greece. But he then goes on to argue that the foreigners serving Athens would not risk exile following defeat for the sake of a few days' high pay.⁸ The most vivid evidence that rates of pay were important is the story Xenophon tells (*Hell.* 1.5.6) of how, when the Persian prince Cyrus asked Lysander how best he could please him, Lysander replied, 'if you add an obol to the pay of each sailor'.

But, although the Spartans could not hope to defeat the Athenians unless and until they were able to win at sea, and although they could not achieve that with their existing financial resources, equally the Athenians could not defeat the Spartans unless and until they were able to win on land, and this was not a matter of finance, but of gaining allies. As Perikles also says (1.141.6), 'in a single battle, the Peloponnesians and their allies are able to stand up to all the Greeks'. In this same passage, Thucydides has Perikles single out as a further weakness of the Spartan side the fact that it had no single council chamber (*bouleutérion*: 1.141.6). Presumably he was thinking primarily of the fact that the Athenians could virtually ignore their allies when it came to strategic decisions, whereas the Spartans could not. But he implies that some consideration was given to a common strategy at the meeting of the Spartans' allies which backed their decision to go to war, in 432, there was another meeting at Corinth in the winter of 413/12 (8.8.2), and one would guess that there were similar meetings most winters, when campaigning halted. In any case, whether the lack of a single decision-making body seriously weakened Spartan operations is another question. If anything, it is arguable that the Athenians' more rigid control was the more dangerous because it sometimes led to revolt, as in the case of Mytilene in 428. It was only in the aftermath of the Peace of Nikias in 421 that the Spartans faced real trouble from their allies, and the Athenians faced far worse after the disaster in Sicily. Indeed, Thucydides has the Corinthians claim that their general obedience to orders was one of their side's strengths (1.121.2).

Here Thucydides may particularly have had in mind the contrast between the oligarchic system of government which they and many of Sparta's allies shared, as opposed to the democratic system of Athens. We know little about most of Sparta's allies, but in Corinth, for example, the supreme deliberative body apparently numbered only 80 men, and within this group executive power seems to have been wielded by the eight *probouloi* – a term which Aristotle regarded as quintessentially oligarchic.⁹ Almost certainly there was a property qualification for belonging to the council, as was the case with the councils in Boiotian cities in the early fourth century (*Hell. Ox.* 16.2). States which had restricted access to political rights of this kind prided themselves on their *eunomia* (good order),¹⁰ and this was pre-eminently the virtue claimed for the Spartan system.

This was certainly oligarchic insofar as it restricted full political rights to a minority of the population. Women apart, there was, in effect, a property qualification for citizenship in that all Spartan citizens had to belong to a military mess (*phidition, syssition*), and in order to do so had to make monthly contributions in

kind (cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1271a27ff.). Spartans could also lose their rights for other reasons, for example, cowardice (cf. 5.34.2). Second-class Spartans may have been known as ‘*hypomeiones*’ (inferiors: Xen., *Hell.* 3.3.6), and, if so, they were sufficiently numerous by Xenophon’s time to be listed with helots, *neodamôdeis* (new citizens) and *perioikoi* (neighbours). Of these, the *neodamôdeis* were probably helots who had been emancipated for military service. They first appear in the 420s (5.34.1), when they may have numbered 1,000 (cf. 5.49.1), and we later hear of their forming part of a force of 600 hoplites sent to Sicily in 413 (7.19.3), of 300 being sent to Attica in 412 (8.5.1), and of a few forming part of the garrison of Byzantion in 408 (Xen., *Hell.* 1.3.15). Despite the term used for them, they were almost certainly not full citizens. Perhaps, rather, as free men, and possibly settled at strategic points on the frontier – the first were settled at Lepreon (5.34.1) – they became, in effect, *perioikoi*.¹¹ These last were the free population of the outlying towns and villages in Spartan territory. Although classed as Lakedaimonians like the Spartans themselves (cf., e.g., 4.53.2),¹² and expected to fight alongside the Spartans at least in campaigns outside the Peloponnese,¹³ even sometimes to command in such operations (8.22.1), the *perioikoi* were certainly not full citizens in the sense that they could attend the assembly in Sparta or hold Spartan office.

The extent to which they had some kind of internal self-government in their own communities is debatable. Isokrates claims that their ‘cities’ (*poleis*) had less ‘power’ (*dunamis*) than Attic demes (*Panath.* 179), but this is equivocal: to class perioecic communities as ‘*poleis*’, as, for example, Herodotos also does (7.234.2), suggests that they had some autonomy, but if they had less power than Attic demes, it amounted to very little, and this is borne out by their lack of civic buildings before they won freedom from Sparta.¹⁴ Possibly the truth of the matter is that they were simply part of the Spartan state, and, as such, subject to the same authorities as the Spartans themselves. Isokrates, after all, also says that the ephors could put *perioikoi* to death without trial, and Xenophon says that the kings of Sparta possessed land in many of their communities (*LP* 15.3).

We do not know how many of them there were, but, according to Herodotos (9.11.3, 28.2), there were as many (5,000) as there were Spartans at the battle of Plataia in 479, and the legends of the distribution of land by the lawgiver, Lykourgos, suggest that there were over three times as many (Plut., *Lyk.* 8.3, cf. *Agis* 8). Probably even more numerous were the helots who worked the Spartans’ land and were normally simply regarded as slaves (cf., e.g., 5.23.4). Again, we do not know how many there were, but Herodotos’ statement that there were seven for every Spartan at Plataia (9.10.1, 28.2, 29.1), though probably untrue in itself,¹⁵ at least gives some idea of just how numerous they were believed to be.

All in all, then, the full citizens of Sparta were swamped in a sea of second-class citizens of various kinds: a passage in Xenophon (*Hell.* 3.3.5) suggests that in the early years of the fourth century they formed less than 2 per cent of the adult male population. But within this privileged group power was probably more widely distributed than in Corinth, for example. The titular heads of the

Spartan state were the two kings, one from each of two, separate royal families. Their prestige and wealth – they were regarded as semi-divine, as descended from Zeus via the hero, Herakles – gave them enormous influence, and there are very few instances of the Spartans going against their wishes, though one famous example is precisely their rejection of King Archidamos' advice not to go to war with the Athenians in 432 (1.80ff.). Their constitutional position is perhaps best summed up by the monthly ceremony in which they swore to rule according to the established laws of the state, and the ephors swore, on behalf of the state, to maintain their position, provided that they kept their oaths (Xen., *LP* 15.7). But, for our purposes, the main thing to remember is that one of the kings normally held supreme command in war. For example, one of them led the annual invasions of Attica during the war, and King Agis led the invasion of the Argolid in 418, and commanded at the battle of Mantinea.

The monthly oath indicates that the most important officials after the kings were the five ephors (*ephoroi*). These were elected annually from and by the citizens of Sparta, to hold office from autumn to autumn (cf. 5.36.1), and during their year of office held virtually supreme power (cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1270b8). This was symbolized by their not even having to stand in a king's presence (Xen., *LP* 15.6), and by the fact that dates were expressed by citing the name of one of the ephors (cf., e.g., 2.2.1), not the regnal years of the kings. Ephors presided over the assembly (cf. 1.87.1), and carried out its decisions – for example, it was probably they who mobilized the army. They also had authority over all other officials (Xen., *LP* 8.4; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1271a6), even being empowered to arrest kings (1.131.2), though not to try them. They thus resemble Roman officials with *imperium* rather than the officials of other Greek states. There is no evidence, for example, that any ephor was ever charged with an offence during his year of office, let alone deposed, apart from those who, in wholly exceptional circumstances, opposed the reforms of Agis IV and Kleomenes III in the third century (Plut., *Agis* 12, *Kleom.* 8). Indeed, unlike Roman officials, ephors even appear to have enjoyed immunity from prosecution after their year of office.

Why the Spartans entrusted these seemingly unique powers to the ephors is problematical, but it may have been their way of reconciling the discipline on which they prided themselves with the equality among themselves they also claimed. By Xenophon's time, at any rate, they were sometimes referred to as 'equals' (*homoioi*; e.g. *Hell.* 3.3.5). Thus ephors could almost certainly only hold the office once, so their long-term influence was negligible, unlike that of the kings, who, naturally, held office for life, and Aristotle also says that the ephors were very much 'men of the people' and often poor (*Pol.* 1270b8–10). In other words, their influence went solely with the office.

In particular, they appear to have had little or no military function. It is true that two of them are said to have accompanied a king on campaign (Xen., *Hell.* 2.4.36; *LP* 13.5), but even if this is true,¹⁶ they are said never to have interfered except at the king's request. They may thus have had some influence on strategy in the widest sense, but not on strategy or tactics in the field. How they were

elected is unknown. Aristotle stigmatizes the method as ‘childish’ (*Pol.* 1270b28), and since he uses the same term (*paidariôdês*) for the method of electing members of the *gerousia* (1271a10: see below), presumably it was the same. The only description of the procedure, however, is Plutarch’s in his life of Lykourgos (26.2–3). Candidates paraded before the assembly in an order decided by lot, while ‘tellers’, shut away in a nearby building from which they could not see what was happening, determined who received the loudest acclamation.¹⁷

The full citizens of Sparta not only elected their most important officials, in however ‘childish’ a manner, but made the most important policy decisions, meeting in assembly (*ekklêsia*),¹⁸ as Thucydides’ account of the debate on whether to go to war with the Athenians makes clear (1.67ff.). It is sometimes said that the assembly really only rubber-stamped decisions taken elsewhere, for example in the *gerousia*, and that ordinary citizens were not even allowed to speak in the assembly, only to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to proposals put before them. But Thucydides never even mentions the *gerousia*, and his account of the debate in 432 implies that views were aired before the assembly not merely by Corinthian and Athenian envoys, King Archidamos and the ephor, Sthenelaïdas, but also by other, unnamed, ‘ordinary’ Spartans. This is the plain implication of his statement that after the Corinthians and Athenians had had their say, and the Spartans had begun to debate among themselves, ‘the opinions [*gnômai*] of the majority [*tôn pleonôn*] tended in the same direction’ (1.79.2), namely in favour of war, until King Archidamos gave voice to a contrary view.¹⁹ At least once, moreover, Thucydides records an occasion when the assembly decided upon a policy different from the one the ephors and ‘those in authority’ (*hoi en telei*: 6.88.10) had in mind (6.93.1–3).²⁰

How far, however, the Spartan assembly’s decision-making extended is another question. It may be indicative that, unlike the Athenians, the Spartans do not appear to have recorded decisions on stone, and it is possible that many decisions were made by the ephors and others of ‘those in authority’ without reference to the assembly. But the latter may have decided more than the sources appear to say – indeed, that whenever they say ‘the Spartans’ decided this or that, we should see a decision of the assembly, even if it was merely rubber-stamping a policy already decided upon elsewhere. It is suggestive, for example, that Thucydides explains why King Agis could act ‘without [the authority of] the Spartan state’ while commanding at Dekeleia (8.5.3).

The passage of Thucydides referred to above (6.88–93) also shows that the ephors were not the only officials Sparta had, but who the others were and what they did are very unclear. One group was the twenty-eight *gerontes* (‘elders’) who made up the *gerousia*. But although they may be included in the expression ‘those in authority’ and so may have had some say in the direction of the war, it is difficult to be certain of this, since, as we have seen, they are never mentioned by Thucydides, and never in this capacity by Xenophon. In his essay on the Spartan constitution, the latter gives them a purely judicial function (*LP* 10.2), as does Aristotle (*Pol.* 1270b37, 1275b10). If we are to believe Pausanias (3.5.2),

they, with the ephors and the other king, constituted a ‘high court’ to judge a king. Aristotle makes it clear that in practice, at any rate, eligibility for the *gerousia* was not merely restricted by age, as the term for its members implies – almost certainly they had to be over sixty – but also by birth (cf. *Pol.* 1265b36, 1270b17, 1294b28–9, 1306a16–19), and they also held office for life. But at least they were chosen by the citizens of Sparta, however dubious the method used.

Among the military officials, the most important was the navarch (*navarchos*, ‘admiral’), perhaps originally appointed to take command of a fleet for a specific task, but later appointed annually, and technically, like the ephors, not reappointable (cf. Xen., *Hell.* 2.1.7).²¹ Aristotle, almost certainly with Lysander in mind, describes the office of navarch as that of a third king (*Pol.* 1271a40), and a considerable degree of independence of the home authorities was inherent in its nature, since admirals tended to command at a distance from Sparta. But Lysander himself demonstrates that there was a limit to the navarch’s power. His attempt to set up narrow oligarchies in the Aegean, consisting of his own partisans, was thwarted by the ephors (Xen., *Hell.* 3.4.2). The navarch had a deputy, with the title *epistoleus* (literally ‘secretary’: Xen., *Hell.* 2.1.7), and there was also another naval officer with the title *epibatês* (literally ‘marine’: see, e.g., 8.61.2).

On land, after the king and other *ad hoc* commanders-in-chief like Brasidas and Gylippos, there were at least four grades of officers – polemarchs (*polemarchoi*, war-leaders), *lochagoi* (*lochoi*-leaders), *pentekonteres* or *pentekosteres* (commanders of fiftieths) and *enômotarchai* (commanders of *enômotiai*), but we do not know how any of these were appointed. One might guess that navarchs were chosen by some kind of election, certainly once the office became annual, and the same may be true of polemarchs, the earliest of whom to be mentioned held an independent command at Tempe in 480 (Hdt. 7.173.2). But it is equally possible that they and the other more junior officers were chosen by the kings or the ephors. The latter chose the *hippagretai* (leaders(?) of the *hippeis*: Xen., *LP* 4.3).

But what is most significant about these officers is their number. It may not seem so unusual to us, accustomed as we are to all the ranks from field-marshal down, but the way in which Thucydides remarks on the Spartan chain-of-command at the battle of Mantinea (5.66.3) suggests that it was unusual then; indeed, he goes on to note (5.66.4) that ‘almost all the Spartan army, except a small part, consists of officers in command of officers’. We know even less about other Greek armies, but in that of Athens, for example, there seems to have been no rank below that of *lochagos*. This presumably means that there was no unit smaller than a *lochos*, and although the number of men in a *lochos* clearly varied from army to army, it never appears to have been fewer than several hundred. The size of the units in the Spartan army at the time of the Peloponnesian War is debatable, but the smallest unit, the *enômotia*, consisted of only thirty-two men on average at Mantinea (5.68.3), and there is reason to believe that its maximum paper-strength was only forty.²²

This meant, quite simply, that the Spartan army was more flexible than its opponents, and it is this, rather than the training of Spartan boys, which gave the

Spartans the edge in battle. Thucydides has Perikles sneer at what he calls the ‘laborious training’ (*epiponos askêsis*: 2.39.1) of the Spartans, in the Funeral Speech, claiming that the Athenians with their ‘unrestrained lives’ (*aneimenôs diaitômenoî*) were just as ready to face danger. But courage is not all that matters in battle, and is no substitute for the kind of training which enabled the Spartans to perform drills which were beyond other people (cf. Xen., *LP* 11). The battle of Mantinea was to demonstrate the difference between Spartan professionalism and their opponents’ amateurism.

There is, however, a question of whether Spartan professionalism had become diluted by the time of the Peloponnesian War by lack of enough men of full-citizen status. Although we do not have sufficient evidence to be certain, it seems likely that originally all Spartan hoplites belonged to a *phidition* and so shared the *esprit de corps* which messing together would have engendered. But by 425 the 292 Spartan soldiers taken prisoner on Sphakteria included only ‘about 120 *Spartiatai*’ (i.e. full citizens: 4.38.5), and there is no reason to believe that they were unrepresentative. The men who made up the original force had been chosen by lot ‘from all the *lochoi*’ (4.8.9),²³ and when the prisoners were later taunted for not being as brave as those who had died, one of them remarked that ‘it would be a valuable “spindle” [*atraktos*, i.e. arrow] which could pick out the brave men’ (4.40.2).

Who, then, were the non-Spartiate members of this force? It is usually thought they were *perioikoi*, but it is possible that this is wrong. Thucydides says that when the Spartans rallied for the campaign, ‘the Spartans [*Spartiatai*] themselves and the nearest of the *perioikoi*’ came immediately, but the arrival of ‘the other Lakedaimonians’ was slower (4.8.1). This surely implies that the *perioikoi* served in different units from ‘the Spartans themselves’, and a number of passages in Xenophon indicate that this was still true in the fourth century.²⁴ It is more likely, then, that Spartan units were composed of full citizens and ‘inferiors’, since even if the latter were not brought up in the same way as the former,²⁵ at least they were Spartans, and, presumably, available for the kind of unit-training which Spartan drill presupposes.

Spartan hoplites, like those of other states, were armed with an 8–9-foot (2.4–2.7-metre) pike and a short sword, and carried a circular shield, about 3 feet (1 metre) in diameter, made from a wooden core with a bronze facing.²⁶ It was held by inserting the left arm up to the elbow through a central arm-band, and then gripping a strap or cord at the rim. This meant that, carried naturally, the shield protected the left half of the torso, but not the right; to cover the right half, a man depended on his right-hand neighbour’s shield, and hence hoplites fought almost literally shoulder to shoulder, as each man tried to keep behind his neighbour’s shield (cf. 5.71.1).

How much other protection Spartan hoplites wore by the time of the Peloponnesian War is not certain. They probably wore bronze helmets, as other hoplites did, but in one passage in which Thucydides is thought to refer to Spartan helmets (4.34.3), the word he uses (*piloî*) literally means something made

of felt. However, the word may have come to mean metal helmets with the same conical shape as felt caps, or may here mean ‘felt jerkins’. After remarking that the *piloi* ‘did not keep the arrows out’, he adds that ‘the javelins broke off in them when they were hit’, and one can hardly imagine a javelin breaking off in a felt cap or any kind of helmet.²⁷ But even if *piloi* here does mean ‘caps’, Spartan hoplites probably did wear some kind of body-armour, perhaps of leather, quilted linen or felt, as again most hoplites did, and greaves to protect their lower legs.²⁸ Although it has been suggested that they were experimenting with lighter equipment by the time of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides repeatedly contrasts their lack of mobility with their opponents’ mobility in his account of the fight on Sphakteria (4.32.4, 33.2), and he can hardly be simply thinking of their shields.

The fighting at Pylos and on Sphakteria also exemplifies how different the Peloponnesian War was from the old-fashioned kind of conflict where the issue was usually decided by a single set-piece battle. Apart from the war at sea, the Spartans found themselves fighting a war on land on all kinds of terrain, from the highlands of Macedonia to the brush-covered hills of Akarnania and from headlands and islands to the upland plains of Arcadia. They found themselves taking part in raiding, sieges and landings from ships, in addition to set-piece battles, and this also meant fighting with and against other kinds of troops. For example, on Sphakteria they encountered archers and the light, javelin-armed infantry known as ‘peltasts’ from the wicker-work shield (*pelta*) they carried, to say nothing of thousands of sailors armed with anything that came to hand. They were thus subjected to a barrage of missiles (4.34.1), including stones picked up and thrown by the sailors, as opposed to sling-stones (cf. 6.69.2, where both slingers and stone-throwers are mentioned).

This new kind of warfare sometimes led to problems for the Spartans. For example, on Sphakteria, they were bewildered when attacked by missile-armed troops (4.34.2), though they were quite prepared to take on twice as many Athenian hoplites (4.33.1), and, later, Athenian hit-and-run raids led to some loss of morale even among Spartan hoplites (4.56.1). But it would be a mistake to think that the Spartans were less able to cope than other Greeks. In fact, all the Greeks found themselves fighting a war on a scale none of them had ever before experienced, and the Spartans adapted as well as anyone. They raised a force of cavalry and archers for the first time, in 424, for example (4.55.2), and Brasidas proved adept in the use of light troops in Macedonia and Thrace.

Above all, the Spartans proved themselves capable of learning how to fight at sea, despite what Thucydides has Perikles claim (1.141–2). In other words, in the end, they realized how the war had to be fought, whereas the Athenians failed to do so. Apart, perhaps, from Alkibiades, no Athenian appears to have grasped that the Spartans could be defeated only on land, but, if we are to believe Thucydides (1.80–2), King Archidamos already understood that the Athenians could be defeated only at sea before the war even started. Once the opportunity came, with the defeat of the Athenian expedition to Sicily, the

Spartans not only immediately took advantage of it (cf. 8.2.3ff.), but apparently knew how to apply their new-found seapower. Lysander's triumph at Aigospotamoi was the culmination of a strategy already formulated at a conference at Corinth seven years earlier (8.8.2), and, indeed, the strategy already hinted at by Archidamos.

From what has already been said, it should be clear that the enemies with whom the Spartans had to deal were in many respects very different from themselves. At some point in the distant past, the whole of Attica had become a single state, and, unlike Lakadaimon, with its Spartan elite and outlying communities of second-class citizens, all the people of Attica had become 'Athenians'. There is no trace of *periokoi* here, and thus no term corresponding to '*Lakedaimonioi*' and comprising both citizens of Athens itself and the outlying towns and villages; the word '*Attikoi*' for 'people of Attica' hardly ever occurs and never in Thucydides. Still less were there any people in Attica corresponding to the helots, though there were thousands of chattel-slaves; more than 20,000, for example, deserted in 413 (2.27.5).

By the time of the Peloponnesian War, Athens was probably the most democratic state in Greece. The main decision-making body was the assembly (*ekklêsia*), which all males of Athenian birth on both sides and over eighteen were eligible to attend, the chief difference from Sparta being that there was no property qualification. It is also important to remember that the assembly was not just the ultimate political authority, as a modern electorate is at elections or when a referendum is held. It was, in a very real sense, the 'government' of Athens, dealing not only with the big issues such as peace and war, but, for example, even with the details of who was to command particular operations and what forces they were to have (cf., e.g., 6.8–26). The difference between the Spartans and the Athenians in this respect is illustrated by the Athenian Kleon's reaction to a request by Spartan envoys that their proposals for a truce be discussed by a committee. According to Thucydides (4.22.2), he declared that he now knew they were not in earnest because 'they were unwilling to say anything to the people *en masse* but wanted to sit down with just a few men'.

To help the Athenian assembly with its deliberations, there was a council (*boulê*) of 500 citizens over the age of thirty, and not only could nothing, in theory, be debated in the assembly which had not previously come before the council, but surviving inscriptions show that the council's proposals were often accepted without amendment. But the assembly *could* amend any proposal put before it, or even instruct the council to bring forward a proposal on any given issue. More importantly, the way the council was constituted precluded it from having any real, autonomous power. Its members were chosen annually by lot, and even in the fourth century a man could serve on it only twice and then not twice running; in the fifth century possibly only one term was allowed. The council was obviously intended to be little more than an administrative subcommittee of the assembly, and one should not imagine that it was there to exercise any restraint on the main body. In 411, for example, the oligarchic conspirators

evidently regarded the council as a bastion of democracy, and almost their first act was to dissolve it (8.69).

The titular head of the Athenian state was the archon, chosen annually from citizens belonging to the three upper property classes, but neither he nor the eight other archaic officials – the polemarch, *basileus* (king) and the six *thesmothetai* (decision-givers) – any longer had any real power. They, like the many other minor executive officials, were chosen by lot, and could not hold the same office twice. The most important officials were now the ten *stratēgoi* (generals), elected annually by the assembly from citizens aged over thirty. As their title implies, they had originally been purely military officials, and they still commanded Athens' armies and navies. But, unlike almost all other officials, they were directly elected and there was no restriction on the number of times they could be re-elected. As a result, they had come to wield an influence beyond the military sphere. Perikles, for example, was continuously re-elected for fifteen terms from 443 to 429, and Thucydides famously declared that this meant that 'what was in theory a democracy came to be in practice rule by the first man' (2.65.9).

But even a Perikles could 'rule' only by persuading the assembly to accept his policy, and shortly before his last re-election he was fined for leading Athens into war (2.65.3), and almost certainly deposed from office (cf. DS 12.45.4; Plut., *Per.* 35.4). A similar fate befell Eurymedon in 424 (4.65.3), following his withdrawal from Sicily, and his two colleagues, Pythodoros and Sophokles (not the tragedian), were exiled, as was Thucydides himself, in that year, as a result of failure as a *stratēgos* (5.26.5). Later in the war, six *stratēgoi* were executed after the victory at Arginousai for failing to pick up survivors or the bodies of the dead from wrecked Athenian ships (Xen., *Hell.* 1.7.1ff.; DS 13.101).

Below the *stratēgoi* came the ten *taxiarchoi*, each commanding one of the ten *taxeis* into which the army was divided, and, like the *stratēgoi*, elected by the assembly. Below the *taxiarchoi*, presumably, came the *lochagoi*, who, by the end of the fourth century, were appointed by the *taxiarchoi* (AP 61.3); in addition, there were two *hipparchoi* and ten *phylarchoi* in charge of the cavalry. At sea, squadrons and fleets were also commanded by *stratēgoi*, and at Arginousai there were ships described as 'of the *taxiarchoi*' and 'of the *nauarchoi*', which hints at a more complex naval hierarchy, though details are lacking. Individual ships were normally commanded by trierarchs (*trierarchoi*), who, however, were wealthy men, responsible for equipping the trireme they commanded, and hence, until they gained experience, hardly 'professionals'; the highest-ranking professional seaman on a trireme was the *kubernētēs* (helmsman).²⁹

The trireme was the main warship used by both sides. About 130 feet (40 metres) long, by about 18 feet (5 metres) wide, when fully manned it was propelled by 85 oarsmen a side, each rowing a single oar. The lowest bank of oarsmen were the 27 *thalamioi*, then came the 27 *zugioi*, and finally, at the upper level, the 31 *thranitai*; in addition, there were deck-hands, including the helmsman, and a force of marines. The standard complement was 200 men, but more could be carried, particularly marines.

Various passages in the ancient sources, reinforced by the reconstruction of a trireme, have shown that under oar such a vessel could achieve a maximum speed of about 9 knots, for a short burst, and could cruise at 6 or 7 knots. Under sail it could probably cruise at a slightly higher speed for longer distances, but sails were not used in battle, since a trireme was far more manoeuvrable under oar.³⁰

There were two basic ways in which it was used in battle, ramming and boarding, though the first could always lead to the second. Thucydides regarded a battle in which both sides relied on boarding as old-fashioned (1.49.1–3), and by the time of the Peloponnesian War the Athenians had decreased the standard number of marines to ten hoplites and four archers, relying primarily on ramming. Even ramming head-on had come to be considered a sign of lack of skill in a helmsman (7.36.5), and, instead, Athenians used the speed and manoeuvrability of their ships to ram an enemy in side or stern. This was achieved either by rowing through the enemy line (the *diekplous*) or by rowing round either flank (the *periplous*: cf. 7.36.3–4). Even with the new tactics, however, there was always a danger that the ramming ship would either be damaged or become entangled with its opponent.

The trireme also limited strategy. It is true, as Perikles declares (2.62.2), that no one could prevent the Athenians' sailing wherever they wished. The Sicilian expedition was a spectacular example of a long-distance strike – Sicily is about 600 miles (960 kilometres) from the Peiraieus by the coastal route. But, as the siege of Syracuse was to demonstrate, even a coastal city could not be taken by seapower alone. The furthest inland any Athenian raiding-party is ever recorded as having penetrated, in mainland Greece, is less than 5 miles (8 kilometres: 2.26.2). Triremes, moreover, were designed primarily for battle, and although they could make long voyages, as the expedition to Sicily showed, they could not remain continuously at sea for any length of time, mainly because they could not carry sufficient food, and, above all, water, and the oarsmen would not have accepted the cramped and insanitary conditions for long. Even in the small-scale operations around Pylos, Thucydides mentions Athenian crews eating ashore in relays (4.26.3), and even putting in on the enemy-held island of Sphakteria (4.30.2). On a long voyage, they put in as often as they could, even if it meant landing in hostile territory (cf., e.g., Xen., *Hell.* 6.2.28–9).

This meant that however dominant one side was at sea, a continuous blockade of even a single port, let alone a lengthy coastline, was impossible. All one could do was to station one's ships as near as possible to the place one wished to blockade, and hope to get to sea soon enough to intercept any enemy vessels trying to break out. During the siege of Syracuse, for example, we hear not only of a single ship getting safely into harbour, despite the overwhelming Athenian naval presence (7.2.1), but of a squadron of twelve ships succeeding in doing so, even though twenty had been sent out to intercept them (7.7.1; cf. 7.4.7). Thus there was no question of the Athenians attempting to blockade the Peloponnesians, as the Royal Navy attempted to blockade continental enemies in the Napoleonic Wars and the two world wars.

The Athenian navy was by far the largest in the Greek world at the outset of the war, with no fewer than 300 seaworthy triremes (2.13.8). The next largest was that of Kerkyra (1.33.1), which had 120 triremes (1.25.4), and Kerkyra was allied to Athens. In addition, Athens could dispose of ships from Chios and Lesbos; fifty ships from these two islands, for example, joined in the attack on Epidauros in 430 (2.56.2). The Athenians naturally could not man all their ships at any one time – apart from the cost, 300 triremes would have required 60,000 able-bodied men. But the existence of this huge number of seaworthy hulls gave them a substantial reserve. The revenue from the empire had also enabled them to accumulate a reserve of 6,000 talents – enough to keep all 300 triremes in operation for twenty months – and revenue from the empire came to 600 talents a year (2.13.3).³¹

The origins of the empire lay in the aftermath of the Persian wars. Although the Greeks had been led to victory by the Spartans, the Athenians had provided about half the ships for the naval operations. Thus, when the Greek states of the islands and coasts of the Aegean became dissatisfied with Spartan leadership, it was natural for them to make approaches to the Athenians. The result was the setting up of a new alliance, in the winter of 478/7 (1.95). This originally had its headquarters on the island of Delos, where its treasury was situated and meetings of representatives held (1.96.2) – hence, the modern term ‘Delian league’. But the ancient name was ‘the Athenians and their allies’, just as the Spartan alliance was properly ‘the Lakedaimonians and their allies’, and from the first the Athenians occupied a dominant position. In Greek terms, the Athenians were the ‘leaders’ (*hêgemones*) of the alliance (cf. 1.95.1, 96.1, 97.1, etc.). They decided which allies were to contribute ships and which cash, officials apparently appointed by them, though known as ‘Greek stewards’ (*hellênotamiai*: 1.96.2), administered the funds, and Athenians invariably commanded alliance forces.

The alliance grew rapidly through a mixture of voluntary adherence and the use of force until it embraced nearly all the islands of the Aegean, including the Dodecanese, and cities on the coasts of Macedonia, Thrace, the Hellespont (Dardanelles), the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) and Asia Minor as far east as Phaselis. At first Athens’ allies probably enjoyed a wide measure of genuine independence (cf. 1.97.1), but Athenian control was always tight and by the outbreak of our war, the alliance had become an empire (*archê*: cf. 1.97.2). Following the subjugation of Samos in 440/39, the only remaining ‘allies’ that had any real independence were the Chians and Lesbians. Above all, the financial contributions made by the allies had come to resemble ‘tribute’, at least from 454 when the treasury of the alliance was moved to Athens. When war broke out, the funds were regarded by the Athenians as forming part of the revenue of the Athenian state (cf. 2.13.3ff.).

The Athenians could also draw on their allies both to help man their fleet and to add to their strength on land. They themselves had 29,000 hoplites, including those provided by the metics (*metoikoi*, ‘resident aliens’: 2.13.6), though not all were available for front-line service,³² and we hear of others from Miletos,

Andros and Karystos (4.42.1), from the Athenian colonists of Lemnos and Imbros (4.28.4), peltasts from Ainos (4.28.4) and slingers from Rhodes (6.43); mercenaries from outside the empire included archers from Crete (6.43).

The differences between the two sides are obvious, but whether they were crucial to the outcome is another question. The Athenians could, perhaps, make use of their allies without consultation to a greater extent than the Spartans, but if Thucydides' account of the way in which Kleon came to be appointed to the command at Pylos (4.27–8) is anything like the truth (see below, pp. 74–5), the Athenian way of running the war would seem like a recipe for howling chaos. However, although one may have reservations about some of the more grandiose plans for knocking Boiotia out of the war (see below, pp. 59–61, 87), and about the Sicilian expedition (see below, pp. 132ff.), and executing six of one's ten most senior officers may seem excessive (see below, pp. 234–5), on the whole there is no reason to believe that the Athenian system was any less efficient than the Spartan.

If one takes Athenian dominance at sea into account, the two sides were evenly matched, and this may explain the 'phoneyess' of some of the warfare, particularly in the early years. In the end, neither side could win unless and until it was prepared to take on the other on its own element.

2

CAUSES

The causes of this great conflict already appear to have been controversial in Thucydides' time, judging by what he says (1.23.5–6), and controversy almost invariably surrounds the causes of any war. Apart from anything else, it all depends on what one means by 'causes'. One has only to think of the continuing arguments about more recent conflicts to realize that we are never going to be quite certain about all the factors that led to the Peloponnesian War. Here, we do not even know precisely what was said by the various parties to the debates at Athens and Sparta, or the actual terms of diplomatic exchanges, let alone what was said behind closed doors, or what was in the minds of participants. The difficulties have also been compounded by attempts to pin the blame on one side or the other. Thucydides at least avoids this, but when he says that his object in discussing the causes of the war was that 'no one should ever have to enquire why so great a war arose among the Hellenes' (1.23.5), he should have known he was doomed to frustration.¹

His view was that the real cause of the war was Spartan fear of the Athenians' growing power, and he enunciates and develops this in three short passages (1.23.5–6, 1.88 and 1.118), separated by two long excursuses. The first excursus (1.24–87) is on the overt reasons for hostility between the two sides and the debate at Sparta to which these led, the second (1.89–117) on the events that led to the growth of Athenian power after the Persian wars. In the first of the short passages, he divides the causes into what he calls the 'motives' (*aitiai*) and 'differences' (*diaphorai*), on the one hand, and the 'truest reason' (*alêthestatê prophasis*) on the other. What the former were becomes clearer at the end of the passage when he describes the *aitiai* (here clearly including *diaphorai*) as 'openly expressed' (*es to phaneron legomenai*) and goes on to give an account of what they were. They were the clashes between the Athenians and the Corinthians over Kerkyra and Poteidaia (1.24–65), which he sums up (1.66.1) by repeating that these were 'the *aitiai* the Athenians and Peloponnesians already had for hostility to one another'. It also emerges that the Aiginetans, though 'not sending envoys openly [*phanerôs*]' to Sparta, through fear of the Athenians, secretly joined the Corinthians in clamouring for war, and that the Megarians, too, had 'no small differences [*diaphora*]' with the Athenians, among them that they were debarred

from the ports in the Athenian empire and from the *agora* (market place) at Athens itself (1.67.2–4).

The ‘truest reason’ for the war, however, Thucydides considered to be Spartan fear of the growing power of the Athenians (1.23.6), and whatever the precise etymology and meaning of the word ‘*prophasis*’, the adjective ‘truest’ clearly implies that he thought this was the real reason for the war. It was, however, ‘least apparent in what was said [*aphanestatê de logôî*]’ in contrast to the ‘openly expressed’ causes, for obvious reasons. No Spartan would admit to ‘fear’, though an ephor might refer to the Athenians’ growing power (1.86.5), and no ally of the Spartans would dare talk of their ‘fear’ in their presence, though a Kerkyraian ambassador might naturally refer to it before the Athenian assembly (1.33.3).

It is important to remember that Thucydides is not here drawing a distinction between a real reason for the war and alleged causes which were false. The Kerkyra and Poteidaia episodes, the secret complaints of the Aiginetans and the differences the Megarians had with the Athenians were all real enough. The point he is making is that behind all this lay Spartan fear of the Athenians.

An obvious possible objection to this view is that it is not true – that Athenian power was not growing and therefore the Spartans were not afraid of it. Had not Athenian power been considerably diminished by the loss of Boiotia and Lokris after the battle of Koroneia in 447 (1.113), by the defection of Megara in 446 (1.114.1), and by their having to give up Nisaia and Pegai, Megara’s ports, together with Trozen and Achaia, by the Thirty Years’ Peace (1.115.1)?

But the Spartans might have *thought* Athenian power was growing, and hence been afraid, even if they were wrong, and there were Athenian gains to be set against their losses. There was, first, the colony they had founded at Thouria (now Sibari) in southern Italy, in 443 (cf. DS 12.35.11ff.). In 440/39, they had defeated Samos, one of only three remaining allies with their own fleets, and compelled its people to demolish their walls and surrender their ships (1.115.2ff.). Next came the foundation of Amphipolis in Thrace in 437/6 (4.102.2–3).² This not only controlled the Strymon, which it spanned, but commanded the main crossing-place for the west–east route from Macedonia to the Hellespont (cf. 4.108.1). It was also an important source of timber for shipbuilding and lay near the Mount Pangaion gold-mining region.

In 436 came Perikles’ expedition to the Black Sea, which led to the settlement of Athenian colonists at Amisos (Theopompos, *FGH* 115F389) and Sinope (Plut., *Per.* 20.2), the mention of the latter in a new reading of a casualty list (*IG* i³ 1180) now giving the date. This might have caused some disquiet to the Megarians, who had settled at nearby Herakleia Pontika in the sixth century. Probably to the early 430s also belongs the undated Athenian expedition to Akarnania (2.68.7–8). This led to an alliance which was to be of some importance in the war, and may well have annoyed the Corinthians, who had a string of colonies in the area. In addition to all this, the alliance with the Kerkyraians themselves, in 433, brought a considerable accession of strength, since they possessed the second-largest navy in the Greek world, as we have seen. Some time

in 433/2, possibly as a result of this alliance, ambassadors from Rhegion (Reggio di Calabria) in southern Italy and Leontinoi (Lentini) in Sicily also came to Athens to conclude or renew further alliances (ML 63 and 64=Fornara 124 and 125). Again, these were later to be of some significance.

Thus Athenian influence certainly continued to spread in the years after the Thirty Years' Peace, even if one may feel, with hindsight, that it reached its zenith with the overrunning of central Greece in the 450s. Thucydides evidently knew of most of this, though he does not mention the Black Sea expedition. But he does not set the evidence out in a systematic way, and it is this that has led to doubts about his analysis of the underlying cause of the war.

It may be, however, that by devoting the twenty-nine chapters of his second excursus to events from the Persian wars to the suppression of Samos, he wants us to understand that it was not the recent growth in Athenian power that the Spartans feared so much as its undoubted growth after the Persian wars. He makes this explicit at the end of the second excursus, in the longest exposition of his view of the causes of the war (1.118.2). Here he says that it was during the events covered by the excursus that the Athenians made their empire stronger and themselves developed great power, while the Spartans, although they realized what was going on, did little or nothing to prevent it, 'until the power of the Athenians clearly began to increase and they began to encroach on their [the Spartans'] alliance'.

A second possible objection to Thucydides' view of the causes of the war – that he failed to take into account Athenian aggression, particularly economic, against such places as Corinth and Megara – is even less compelling.³ Apart from the fact that it is questionable whether ancient wars were ever fought for this kind of reason, the hypothesis in this case rests on dubious evidence. For example, it has been claimed that Thucydides himself lets the cat out of the bag when he first has the Kerkyraian ambassadors to Athens argue, almost in an aside, that one advantage to the Athenians of an alliance with them was their island's position (1.36.2), and then says that this did weigh with the Athenians (1.44.3). But he is not talking here of the commercial advantages of Kerkyra's position; rather, he has in mind its strategic advantages. It could prevent 'naval forces' (*nautikon*: 1.36.2) coming from Italy and Sicily to the Peloponnesians' aid or going from the Peloponnese to the west.

Similarly, it has been claimed that the Athenian decree debarring Megarians from the ports of the Athenian empire and the *agora* at Athens itself was an attempt to cripple Megarian trade, and again it is noted how oddly Thucydides mentions it. It is first mentioned as one of the complaints the Spartans' allies brought up at Sparta (1.67.4), but the impression given there is that it was relatively unimportant. It is given only a single sentence after forty-three chapters devoted to the affairs of Kerkyra and Poteidaia. But then, suddenly, it becomes the most important item in the second Spartan ultimatum (1.139.1).

Here again there is some misunderstanding of what Thucydides says about the decree, and, indeed, there is reason to believe that there was more than one.⁴ But

there is more to be said for the idea that the Athenians were aiming to cripple Megarian trade. It may be the case that the ban on Megarian entry into the Athenian *agora* was for religious reasons, the Megarians having been accused by the Athenians of cultivating sacred land on the borders between them (1.139.2). But, as has been pointed out, 'sanctions may have a religious form but have a political or economic purpose and effect'.⁵ The well-known passage in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (515ff.), in which the Megarian decree is parodied, goes on to say that the Megarians appealed to the Spartans because they were starving, and it is difficult to believe that the playwright did not intend his audience to connect their plight with the decree. Moreover, if the ban on Megarian entry into harbours and the *agora* was purely religious, it is odd that they were not also barred from temples and other sacred places.

But even if the decree was meant to bring economic pressure on the Megarians, this does not mean that it was part of a general Athenian policy aimed at destroying the commerce of rival states. Megara's strategic position, spanning the isthmus of Corinth, was extremely important to the Athenians, as events between 460 and 446, when the Megarians defected to them, had shown. It is true that a Peloponnesian army had managed to reach central Greece, probably across the Gulf of Corinth, before the battle of Tanagra (1.107.2), but once the Athenians had sent ships round to the gulf, the Spartans had been obliged to use the difficult route home through the Geraneian hills (1.107.3). It was not until the Megarians rejoined their alliance some years later that the Spartans were prepared to invade Attica. Thus the Athenian pressure on the Megarians may have been designed to force them once more into alliance with Athens.

There is also the question of the date of the Megarian decree. If it was passed only shortly before the debate at Sparta, it may have been a reaction to Megarian aid to the Corinthians against Kerkyra (1.46.1). The twelve Megarian ships which fought at Sybota were on the right of the Corinthian line (1.48.4), and therefore did not come into contact with the ten Athenian ships on the right of the Kerkyraian line, but presumably the Athenians were aware that there had been Megarians in the enemy fleet. This would have been an appropriate context to rake up charges of sacrilege against the Megarians. After Sybota, the Athenians probably thought that war with the Spartans and their allies was more likely, and that it was time to begin safeguarding Attica against invasion. On the other hand, it is possible that the decree was passed earlier. There may be an allusion to it in the speech of the Corinthian envoys who tried to dissuade the Athenians from concluding the alliance with Kerkyra. The Corinthians argue that it would be more sensible if the Athenians avoided provoking them by trying to diminish 'the already existing suspicion because of the Megarians' (1.42.2). It has been argued that this cannot refer to the hostility between the Athenians and Corinthians arising from the defection of the Megarians to Athens around 460, which Thucydides describes as 'bitter hatred' (1.103.4), because this could hardly be referred to as mere 'suspicion'. In any case, it had ended with the Thirty Years' Peace, since the Corinthians had later dissuaded Sparta's allies from going to war

with Athens over Samos (1.40.5, 41.2).⁶ However, the earlier we put the Megarian decree, the more it weakens the joke about starving Megarians in Aristophanes' play, which was produced in 425, and the arguments for dissociating the Corinthians' 'suspicion' about the Megarians from their 'bitter hatred' are not as cogent as may appear. Hatred, if it is 'bitter' enough, may well leave 'suspicion' behind, and the Corinthians' attitude over Samos does not prove that they were then on particularly friendly terms with the Athenians. Britain refused to support the use of sanctions against Germany in 1935 and negotiated a naval agreement with her in that year, but this hardly means that she ceased to be suspicious of her.⁷

For those determined to see Athenian economic aggression as a factor leading to the war, the best evidence comes in the Corinthian speech at the meeting of Sparta's allies after the Spartan decision to go to war.⁸ In this the Corinthians say that those who already had dealings with the Athenians did not need lessons in being on guard against them, and that those living more in the interior and not on the trade routes should realize that if they did not come to the help of those on the coast, they would find both exporting and importing more difficult (1.120.2). This seems to imply that coastal states had already been suffering from Athenian competition, but even if we can be sure that Thucydides here accurately reports what was said, it does not necessarily mean that the Athenians had already been engaged in some kind of trade war with those on the coast. All the Corinthians are saying is that those on the coast already had reason to be wary of the Athenians, and, in the event of war, those inland could not hope to avoid disruption of trade by refusing to join in. Disruption of trade was not the consequence of dealing with the Athenians, but of war.

Thucydides may, of course, simply have been wrong to think that the real cause of the war was Spartan fear of the growth of Athenian power, but this is belied by the number of occasions on which, according to him, the Spartans had tried to curtail it. In the fullest exposition of his view referred to above (1.118.2), he says that the Spartans were aware of it, but had not done much to prevent it, partly because they were not quick to go to war, partly because they were prevented by wars at home. They thus remained inactive for most of the time, until Athenian power could no longer be ignored and it began to affect their own allies. At this point they declared war.

When he says the Spartans realized that Athenian power was growing but had not done much to prevent it, he presumably had in mind their failure to use force to back up their protest about the refortification of Athens after the Persian invasion, despite their annoyance (1.90–3), and what he seems to think was their naïve acquiescence in the creation of the Athenian alliance (1.95.7). Diodoros, under the year 475/4, reports a series of debates in Sparta on the question of whether to try to recover control in the Aegean by force, ending in rejection of the idea (11.50). This may well be unhistorical, and Thucydides certainly does not mention it, but there were surely Spartans who bitterly resented what had happened.

Diodoros is vague about the arguments used by the principal opponent of war, but one argument he could have used is hinted at by Thucydides when he says that the Spartans were prevented from curtailing the growth of Athenian power by 'wars at home' (1.118.2). He does not say what these wars were, but Herodotos (9.35) says that the seer Teisamenos of Elis helped the Spartans to win five battles, beginning with Plataia in 479, and ending with Tanagra, probably in 457. Between these two came a battle at Tegea against the Tegeates and the Argives, a battle at Dipaieis (or Dipaia) against 'all the Arcadians except the Mantineians', and a battle 'at the isthmus' against the Messenians. We know little about the two battles in Arcadia, but there is other evidence for trouble involving Arcadians and Argives in the 470s and 460s,⁹ and this could well have absorbed most of Spartan energy in those years. The battle 'at the isthmus' against the Messenians presumably took place during the helot revolt,¹⁰ and here Thucydides comes in. He says that the Spartans had secretly promised to invade Attica in response to an appeal from the people of Thasos, who had rebelled from the Athenians, and 'were about to do so' or 'intended to do so' (*kai emellon*: 1.101.2), but were prevented by the helot revolt. Although there is always something dubious about secret promises, Thucydides is not likely to have been so positive unless he had good reason to be, and if the promise is historical, this is a clear example of the Spartans' being prevented from acting against the Athenians by a 'war at home'.

These episodes may have suggested to Thucydides that the Spartans were 'not quick to go to war', but he probably had particularly in mind the fourteen years or so of intermittent warfare between about 460 and 446, sometimes called the 'First Peloponnesian War'. Although Sparta's allies had been involved in considerable fighting with the Athenians in the Argolid, on and off Aigina, and in the Megarid, for a number of years, it was not until, probably, the summer of 457 that the Spartans themselves intervened. Even then, though they sent an army to central Greece and won the battle of Tanagra, they avoided invading Attica (1.108.1–2), though they had just defeated the Athenian army, and their commander on the spot was allegedly in touch with Athenians anxious to overthrow the democracy (1.107.4). It may be that Tanagra was a 'near-run thing' and that he was anxious about his return home, but this may have reinforced Thucydides' belief in Spartan reluctance for all-out war. In this instance, however, the Spartans did, for the first time, intervene against the Athenians.

Nor was this the last hint of Spartan 'fear' of the Athenians' growing power. As we have seen, the Corinthian envoys at Athens in 433 claim that when the Samians revolted from the Athenians in 440, they did not vote against the Athenians 'when the other Peloponnesians were divided in their votes' on whether to help the Samians (1.40.5; cf. 41.2). This presumably means that the Spartans had themselves already voted to give aid to the Samians, and had summoned a congress of their allies to secure their backing.

Thus there is plenty of evidence that the Spartans had been apprehensive about the Athenians from as far back as the end of the Persian wars, and the point at

which they felt they could no longer ignore their growing power, when their own allies began to be affected, was surely the Kerkyraian alliance. This greatly added to Athens' potential naval strength, while at the same time infuriating the Corinthians, the Spartans' most powerful allies. The Poteidaia episode then served to exacerbate growing Corinthian hostility towards the Athenians, and the Megarian decree, if it belongs here, will have added fuel to the flames.

The chain of events which led directly to the outbreak of war began with a quarrel between the Corinthians and their ancient colony, Kerkyra.¹¹ The Kerkyraians had founded a sub-colony on the coast of what is now Albania, at Epidamnos (Dyrrachium, Durazzo, Durrës), but the official 'founder' of the colony, as was often the custom, had come from Corinth, Kerkyra's own mother-city, and some of the colonists were also Corinthians. Thus, when there was a democratic revolution in Epidamnos which led to the expulsion of the aristocracy, and the people found themselves under attack from the exiles and the local natives, they appealed first to the Kerkyraians, but when this fell on deaf ears, to the Corinthians (1.24–5).

The Corinthians, who had been on bad terms with the Kerkyraians for over two centuries (cf. 1.13.4), welcomed a chance to chastise their ungrateful colonists, and sent aid to Epidamnos. But the Kerkyraians reacted violently by sending a fleet to Epidamnos and demanding that the exiles be reinstated and the troops and new settlers from Corinth sent home. When these demands were rejected, they laid siege to the city, and the Corinthians, in turn, began to prepare a relief force, appealing for help from their allies (1.26–7). The Kerkyraians, alarmed at these preparations, sent an embassy to Corinth, accompanied, significantly, by envoys from Sparta and Sikyon, but after fruitless negotiations the Corinthians duly despatched their fleet. The result was a battle off Cape 'Leukimme',¹² which ended in a Corinthian defeat, and on the same day the Epidamnians surrendered to the Kerkyraians.

Hitherto the affair had mainly concerned the Corinthians and Kerkyraians, though it was ominous that if Thucydides correctly summarizes the Kerkyraian representations at Corinth, their envoys already hinted at the possibility of approaching the Athenians, if the Corinthians persisted (1.28.3). On the other hand, the Spartans were evidently anxious to prevent an escalation of the conflict, though, in the end, the Corinthians were too important as allies to antagonize, let alone threaten. Thus they could not prevent them from preparing to renew the conflict. It was news of this that led to a Kerkyraian embassy to Athens (1.31.1–2).

The debates in the Athenian assembly that followed could well have been attended by Thucydides himself, and there is no reason to believe that he has seriously distorted either what was said by the Kerkyraian and Corinthian envoys, or the results,¹³ and we can probably also trust his summary of what swayed the Athenians (1.32–44). Even if we admit that he cannot have known the thoughts of all those who were there, he will have known what he thought himself, and

what other speakers said, and could presumably have gathered from acquaintances how they had felt.

The envoys from Kerkyra assume a war between the Athenians and the Spartan alliance is inevitable (1.33.3, 36.1), and although the Corinthians argue that it is not, Thucydides himself implies that the main reason why the Athenians eventually decided to accept the Kerkyraian overtures was the belief that there was going to be a war, and that, if so, they could not risk the Kerkyraian fleet coming under Corinthian control. He also mentions a machiavellian willingness to allow the Corinthians and Kerkyraians to weaken each other, and Kerkyra's strategic position (1.44.2–3).

There is probably some contemporary evidence that the Athenians were already apprehensive about the possibility of war before the debates, in the decrees moved by Kallias (ML 58=Fornara 119). These are almost certainly to be dated to 434/3, and provide for the treasures from shrines in the countryside and the lower city to be brought to the Acropolis. But one wonders why the Athenians were so apprehensive. So far they did not even have a quarrel with the Corinthians, let alone the Spartans, and even if the Megarian decree had already been passed, there was no particular reason to believe that the Spartans would take up the Megarians' cause; the same applies to the Aiginetans, who had been under Athenian control for more than twenty years. Are we to suppose that there had been some Peloponnesian sabre-rattling of which we know nothing?

That the Athenians were aware that an alliance with the Kerkyraians could be provocative is shown by the fact that it took two assemblies to decide the issue, by the terms of the alliance eventually concluded, and by their subsequent actions. They did not enter into a complete defensive/offensive alliance (a *symmachia* in Greek), which, as Thucydides says (1.44.2), might have obliged them to join the Kerkyraians in attacking the Corinthians, thus breaking the peace with the Peloponnesians. Instead, they concluded a defensive alliance (*epimachia*), which obliged the parties only to come to each other's aid if attacked.

Everything about the squadron sent to Kerkyra's aid also seems designed to advertise caution. It consisted of a mere ten ships, but no fewer than three *stratēgoi* were placed in command, perhaps to ensure that no rash actions were made, and the name of one of the three, Lakedaimonios, showed where at least his father's sympathies had lain. Their rules of engagement also forbade them to fight unless the Corinthians sailed against Kerkyra and were about to land on the island itself (1.45.3). Nevertheless, the prompt sending of even so small a squadron indicates how seriously the Athenians took the new alliance, and the mere presence of Athenian ships might deter the Corinthians from attacking. An inscription survives recording the expenses of the squadron (ML 61=Fornara 126), and it is nice to see that Thucydides certainly got the names of two of the *stratēgoi* right – the name of the third does not survive on the stone. It is also interesting to note that whereas the upper-class Thucydides gives their fathers' names, the inscription, in true democratic style, gives the names of the demes (constituencies) from which they came.

The ten Athenian ships arrived in time to take part in the battle fought off the Sybota islands in August or September 433.¹⁴ Here 90 Corinthian ships, with a further 60 furnished by their allies, faced 110 Kerkyraian with the 10 Athenians, in what was the greatest sea-battle between Greek and Greek to this date (1.50.2). Thucydides thought the battle old-fashioned (1.49.1), because boarding was the order of the day, possibly because the Corinthian ships were crammed with men and supplies – three days' food, according to Thucydides – ready for a landing on Kerkyra. But this should not have stopped the Kerkyraians from using more modern tactics.

It is also interesting that the Corinthians took the left of the line instead of the right, the post of honour, as one might have expected. This may have been because they saw that the ten Athenian ships were on the Kerkyraian right, or because it put them nearer the shore of Kerkyra itself, on which they intended to land if all went well. Similarly, the Athenians may have been stationed nearest the island in the hope that their mere presence might deter an attempt at landing, as they had been ordered to do.¹⁵

At first the Athenian ships avoided direct action, in accordance with their instructions, merely threatening to intervene at any point where the Kerkyraians were in trouble (1.49.4). Meanwhile, twenty Kerkyraian ships on the left defeated the Megarians and Ambrakiots on the Corinthian right, but then foolishly pursued them to their nearby base, which they proceeded to plunder (1.49.5). This further weakened the already outnumbered Kerkyraians, and as the tide of battle began to turn against them, the Athenians were faced with an increasingly serious dilemma. At first they still avoided ramming, but when it became obvious that the Kerkyraians were losing, they finally joined in, and thus, as Thucydides solemnly says, 'it came to the inevitable point that Corinthians and Athenians attacked one another' (1.49.7).

At this point, both sides briefly retired to regroup, and they were preparing to renew the fight when at the last moment the Corinthians suddenly backed water. They had sighted twenty more Athenian ships approaching and feared that they heralded the approach of a larger fleet, and, as darkness was falling, the Kerkyraians also retired (1.50). The twenty Athenian ships were, in fact, all there were. They had been sent as reinforcements twenty-three days after the first squadron, as we know from the same inscription recording expenses (ML 61=Fornara 126).¹⁶ Their presence encouraged the Kerkyraians to renew the challenge next day, but the Corinthians were reluctant to accept it. They now had prisoners on board, they had not been able to repair damaged vessels, and above all they were worried about getting home, if the Athenians chose to regard the peace as having been broken and decided to intercept (1.52). This prompted them to send across to the Athenians to find out how matters stood.

The resulting exchanges are recorded by Thucydides in blunt and simple words that are likely to be authentic (1.53). The Corinthians accused the Athenians of beginning a war and breaking the peace, and bade them take the messengers themselves prisoner if they proposed to prevent the Corinthians from sailing to

Kerkyra or anywhere else. The Athenians replied that they were neither beginning a war nor breaking the peace, but helping allies under attack, and that they would not try to prevent the Corinthians from sailing anywhere except to Kerkyra or any other Kerkyraian territory.

This effectively put an end to the affair. The Corinthians had no intention of renewing the attempt to invade Kerkyra now that they knew the Athenians would resist it, and they were in any case anxious to get home. The Athenians still wanted to avoid war, if at all possible, and so had no intention of preventing their withdrawal. Both sides also satisfied their *amour propre* by claiming victory and erecting trophies to commemorate it. But on the voyage home the Corinthians seized Anaktorion through treachery (1.55.1). It was originally a joint colony of themselves and the Kerkyraians, so they had some right to the place, but if they had wished to avoid further provocation, they would have been well advised to leave it alone.

Thucydides ends his account of the whole episode by saying that the fact that Athenians had fought alongside Kerkyraians against them was the first ‘motive’ (*aitia*: 1.55.2) the Corinthians had for going to war with the Athenians. He then immediately goes on to recount further ‘differences’ (*diaphora*: 1.56.1), this time involving a city on the other side of Greece, Poteidaia (now Nea Potidea) in Chalkidike. This, like Kerkyra, had originally been a Corinthian colony, and still received annual officials of some sort (*epidēmourgoi*) from Corinth. But its people had become allies of the Athenians and paid tribute to them. Now the Athenians demanded that they demolish the wall preventing access from the peninsula of Pallene on which the city lay, expel the Corinthian officials and refuse to receive any more (1.56.2).

Thucydides implies that these demands were prompted by suspicion of the Corinthians and fear that the Poteidaians might be persuaded to revolt by them and Perdikkas, king of Macedonia, and draw other places into rebellion (1.56.2). He goes on to explain that the Athenians took action immediately after the battle of Sybota, because the Corinthians were already openly hostile, and although Perdikkas had formerly been a friend and ally, he was now at war with the Athenians because of their support for his brother, Philip, and his nephew, Derdas. Modern commentators, on the basis of the surviving financial records known as the ‘Athenian Tribute Lists’, and the foundation of Amphipolis, have suggested that the Athenians had already embarked on a new policy in the region, for example by raising the tribute of several places, and that this and the support for Perdikkas’ rebellious relatives were intended to curb his growing power. The ultimatum to the Poteidaians themselves, however, like the Megarian decree, was a response to a feeling that war with the Corinthians at least was increasingly likely.¹⁷

The Athenians were presumably still hoping that the Spartans would not become involved, but they were frustrated by Perdikkas, who sent to Sparta precisely in the hope of embroiling the Athenians in war with the Peloponnesians. At the same time, he tried to gain the support of the Corinthians, the Chalkidians

of Thrace and the Bottiaians, the inhabitants of the central part of the Chalkidike peninsula (1.57.4–5). Worse still, the Poteidaians, while sending envoys to Athens to ask for a withdrawal of the ultimatum, also sent envoys to Sparta, accompanied by representatives from Corinth (1.58.1).

The Poteidaians got nowhere with the Athenians, who instructed the commanders of a squadron preparing to sail to Macedonia to enforce compliance with their demands. But the Spartan authorities promised to invade Attica if Poteidaia was attacked (1.58.1). This is another of those unfulfilled promises which are difficult to assess: are we to suppose that a formal promise was made, backed by a vote in the assembly, as the phrase ‘the Spartan authorities’ rather implies, or was it a promise made in secret by some part of the Spartan ‘establishment’, which could be conveniently forgotten, if necessary, or later given formal sanction? In either case, it is another illustration of Spartan willingness to intervene against the Athenians by force, like the promise to invade Attica prompted by the appeal from Thasos in the 460s.

Whatever form the promise took, it finally persuaded the Poteidaians to revolt, together with the Chalkidians and Bottiaians, and at the same time Perdikkas persuaded the Chalkidians to abandon their small towns on the coast and congregate inland at Olynthos (1.57.6–58). The Athenian Tribute Lists record payments by both the Poteidaians and the Olynthians in spring 432, so presumably the revolt took place later that spring. But even then it had happened before the arrival of the Athenian squadron, and its commanders, realizing that they could not cope with both Macedonia and the rebels, decided to concentrate on the former (1.59).

For their part, the Corinthians were not content with mere promises to help the Poteidaians, though they were still sufficiently anxious not to appear to be overtly breaking the peace to send only a force of hired ‘volunteers’. But their commander was a Corinthian of prominent family, Aristeus, son of the man who had commanded the Corinthians at both Artemision and Salamis (1.60; cf. Hdt. 8.5 and 61). Meanwhile, the Athenian force, which had already taken Therma (Thessaloniki), was joined by reinforcements for an attack on Pydna. But the Athenians knew that their most important task was the suppression of the revolt in Chalkidike, and so patched up a truce with Perdikkas, and made for Poteidaia (1.61). It was thus on the isthmus north of the latter that the second confrontation between Athenians and Corinthians took place.

The battle seems to have been fairly typical. Both sides had cavalry, but Aristeus had stationed his at Olynthos, with the Chalkidians and other allies, ordering it to fall upon the Athenian rear when they advanced to attack him at the isthmus, and the Athenians had sent their cavalry and some of their allies to cover this force (1.62.3–4). The Athenians also had some missile-armed troops, because Aristeus suffered from missile-fire when retreating to Poteidaia (1.63.1). But the main battle seems to have been a straight fight between hoplites. It was also typical in that, although Aristeus and his best troops won on one wing, they pursued the Athenians too far, allowing their other wing to be defeated. Aristeus was able to

make his way back to the safety of Poteidaia only by closing ranks and forcing his way through along the strip of land (*chêlē*) between the wall and the sea (1.63.1).¹⁸ Thucydides does not say which wing he commanded, but the way he escaped suggests he was on the left. He presumably could not reach a city gate giving on to the isthmus because of the defeat of his right wing.

Another point of interest is that Thucydides says ‘signals’ (*sêmeia*: 1.63.2) were raised by the Poteidaians when battle commenced, to let their allies near Olynthos know when to attack, and that they were ‘hauled down’ when the Athenians quickly achieved victory, so that no fighting took place between these troops and the Athenian covering force. One would like to know what form these signals took. One thinks naturally of flags, but it is possible that shields were used. As Thucydides says, the city was 60 stades (6.6 miles, 10.6 kilometres) away from Olynthos, and although it was in plain sight, one would not have thought flags would have been visible at that distance without a telescope, whereas a row of shields might have been, particularly if they flashed in the sun.

The battle, then, ended in an Athenian victory, about 300 of the enemy being killed, for only 150 Athenians, and the latter set up the usual trophy, giving back the enemy dead under truce (1.64.3). According to Plato (*Charm.* 153a–c, *Symp.* 220d–e), it was in this battle that Alkibiades first distinguished himself and Sokrates saved his life. After it, the Athenians laid siege to Poteidaia, cutting it off with walls to north and south, when reinforcements arrived under Phormio. He also used his troops to ravage Chalkidike and Bottiaia and to capture some of the small towns in the area (1.64). Aristeus, meanwhile, advised the Poteidaians to evacuate their city by sea, leaving only a garrison, and, when his advice was rejected, himself managed to slip through the blockade by sea to join the other Chalkidians in guerrilla warfare (1.65).

Thucydides follows his account of these operations by summarizing the ‘motives’ (*aitiai*) the Athenians and Peloponnesians now had for hostility to each other. The Athenians were besieging a Corinthian colony with Corinthians and other Peloponnesians inside; the Peloponnesians had aided a city in alliance with the Athenians, and paying tribute to them, to revolt. ‘War’, he says, ‘had not yet broken out, and the peace was still in force, because the Corinthians had acted on their own initiative’ (1.66), but the latter were not prepared to let matters rest. Instead, they urged their allies to join them in making representations to Sparta, complaining that the Athenians had broken the peace and were wronging the Peloponnesians, while the Aiginetans, who had been under Athenian rule now for about a quarter of a century, also secretly protested that they were not ‘autonomous according to the treaty’ (1.65.1–2).¹⁹ The Spartan response was to invite any other ally, and anyone else, who had a grievance against the Athenians to attend a meeting of their assembly.²⁰

So we come to perhaps the most fateful meeting of the Spartan assembly ever to take place (1.67.3ff.). Thucydides gives us four speeches, by Corinthian and Athenian envoys, and by King Archidamos and the ephor Sthenelaïdas; he also implies that there were other complaints from Sparta’s allies, including the

Megarians (1.67.4), and other speeches from Spartans (1.79.2). He was, presumably, not present himself, but he could have learned what was said by Sparta's allies from the Athenian envoys, and what they had replied. As for Archidamos and Sthenelaïdas, he might later have found out the gist of what they had said from Spartan informants when he was in exile. The upshot was that the Spartan assembly voted by a large majority (1.87.3) that the Athenians had broken the Thirty Years' Peace and that war should be declared. Thucydides says that the Spartans usually voted by acclamation, but that the ephor declared he could not tell on which side the shouts were loudest. So he divided the assembly, wishing to make his fellow-countrymen show their opinion openly to increase their eagerness for war (1.87.2).

Thucydides also says that the vote was not so much influenced by the speeches of their allies as by the feelings of the Spartans themselves towards the Athenians (1.88), and this is consistent with his view that it was Spartan fear of Athenian power that led to the war. Again, however, he is not saying that they were not influenced by what their allies had said, only that this was not the main thing that weighed with them.²¹ It is idle to speculate whether he was right or wrong, but we have seen that he implies that the Spartans had threatened to attack the Athenians twice in the preceding ten years – over Samos in 440 (1.40.5, 41.2), and recently over Poteidaia (1.58.1) – and once before that in the 460s over Thasos (1.101.1–2). If he is right, there is no need to think that they now needed any great urging from their allies.

One might guess, however, that they at least noted the Corinthian argument that the Kerkyra and Poteidaia affairs suggested that the Athenians were preparing for war, since the Kerkyraians could have provided the Peloponnesians with their largest naval force and Poteidaia could have been a good base for operations in Thrace (1.68.4). One may think, too, that they also noted the veiled threat in the Corinthian plea to help the Poteidaians as they had promised, and not drive their other allies to 'some other alliance' (1.71.4).

But if Thucydides has accurately reported what the Corinthians said, one may wonder what they meant. An ancient commentator on the passage says they were thinking of the Argives, and this view is accepted by some modern historians.²² But although the Corinthians did become allies of the Argives in 421 (5.27ff., especially 5.31.6), when they were similarly dissatisfied with Spartan policy, the situation then was quite different. In 432 the Argives were technically bound to the Spartans by treaty, whereas by 421 this was on the point of expiry (5.14.3, 28.2), and, more particularly, the Argives had benefited from their neutrality during the first ten years of the war (5.28.2). If the Corinthians had any particular alliance in mind in 432, they surely meant one with the Athenians, and, if so, this was a real threat.

Finally, if the second Spartan ultimatum is anything to go by, it would seem that the Spartans were also influenced by the Megarian complaints, and this makes sense if they now thought war was inevitable. Megara, whose territory spanned the isthmus of Corinth, was far more important strategically than Kerkyra or

Poteidaia, as we have seen, and one might have expected the Corinthians to say so. But perhaps there was no need if Megarian envoys had already addressed the Spartan assembly, as Thucydides implies (1.67.4).

After the Spartan assembly had voted for war, Thucydides says, the allied representatives were summoned, informed of the decision and told to reassemble at a later date so that united backing for the war might be obtained (1.87.4). Later Thucydides says the Spartans also consulted Delphi as to whether it would be 'better for them if they went to war' (1.118.3), and were assured by Apollo that victory would be theirs if they fought with all their might, and that he would be on their side. Next Thucydides describes the meeting of the allies (1.119ff.), at which, after a further speech from the Corinthians, a vote was taken and the majority voted for war (1.125.1). It was decided, however, that they should not commence operations until all preparations had been made (1.125.2), and in the meantime a series of ultimatums was sent to the Athenians.

The first bade them expel 'the curse of the goddess'. As Thucydides explains in an almost Herodotean digression (1.126.2ff.), this was an attempt to eliminate Perikles, who had inherited from his mother the curse placed on her family for its involvement in a sacrilegious killing some 200 years earlier. The Athenians, however, merely responded by telling the Spartans to get rid of two curses, one derived from the killing of helots removed from Poseidon's sanctuary at Tainaron, the other from the death of the regent, Pausanias. The circumstances under which the latter occurred are set out in an even longer and more Herodotean digression (1.128–38).

More seriously, one may feel, the second ultimatum demanded that the Athenians lift the siege of Poteidaia, let the Aiginetans be 'autonomous', and, above all, rescind the Megarian decree (1.139.1). When this, too, was rejected, a third embassy arrived which simply declared that the Spartans were willing for there to be peace if the Athenians allowed the Greeks to be autonomous (1.139.3). There had already been some talk of Athenians 'enslaving' Greeks, if we are to believe Thucydides, for example by the Corinthians at the Spartan assembly (1.68.3), and, as we have seen, the Aiginetans had then complained that they were not 'autonomous' (1.67.2). One suspects, however, that the second ultimatum had been the really serious one, and that once it had been rejected the Spartans were more concerned with making a propaganda point than with serious negotiation. Thucydides, indeed, says that their pose as the champions of Greek freedom found a ready response (2.8.4).

It was also this last ultimatum which finally drew Perikles into the debate, if we are to believe Thucydides, for it is at this point that he gives Perikles the first of his three speeches (1.140–4). In it he argues against making any concession to the Spartan demands, in particular over the Megarian decree, since this would be taken as a sign of weakness, and goes on to discuss the resources of the two sides, and to set out his strategy. The Athenians took his advice and voted that, while unwilling to do anything under orders, they were willing to reach a settlement on all points in accordance with the Thirty Years' Peace.

Thucydides ends his first book with a brief recapitulation that these were the ‘*aitiai*’ and ‘*diaphorai*’ both sides had before the war, beginning with the Kerkyra and Poteidaia affairs. He says that there was still communication between them and that people continued to travel to and fro ‘without heralds’, indicating that there was still technically no state of war. But there was suspicion, since what was going on amounted to a breaking of the peace and a ‘reason’ or ‘pretext’ (*prophasis*) for war (1.146).

What Thucydides says about the causes of the war is, thus, consistent and a sufficient explanation. We can understand why the war broke out on the basis of what he says. There may have been other factors involved, but to a large extent they only have a place in the discussion if we widen it to include even more fundamental ‘causes’ than his ‘truest reason’. For example, there may have been a certain amount of antagonism between the two sides arising from political ideology. Thus Thucydides himself tells us later that democrats throughout Greece were for the Athenians, whereas oligarchs were for the Spartans (3.82.1; cf. 3.39.6 and 3.47).

Another and even more fundamental source of antagonism may have been that the Spartans and most of their allies spoke the Doric dialect and believed themselves to be ‘Dorians’, whereas the Athenians and most of their allies spoke Ionic, of which Attic is a sub-dialect, and claimed to be of ‘Ionian’ descent. Thus, again, when listing the various states which sent forces to Sicily in 415–413, Thucydides notes it as odd that although the ‘Ionian’ Athenians were fighting the ‘Dorian’ Syracusans, there were a number of ‘Dorians’ in the Athenian forces (7.57–8).

But although these kinds of broader differences may have exacerbated ill-feeling between the two sides, it would be absurd to argue that they were ‘truer’ causes of the war. Still less, surely, should we seek an explanation in fanciful notions of Perikles fanning the flames in order to divert attention from attacks on himself through his friends, Pheidias and Anaxagoras, and his mistress, Aspasia, even though Plutarch says that ‘most sources’ supported the charge (*Per.* 31.2).²³ Nor should we seek to blame one side or the other. As with most wars, one has the impression that beyond a certain point both sides were on separate roller-coasters on a collision course, with neither prepared to give way.²⁴ With the benefit of nearly two and a half thousand years of hindsight, we may think that the war could have been avoided, but the point is precisely that contemporaries lacked that benefit.

STALEMATE

The aim of the Spartans, judging by their final ultimatum, was to compel the Athenians to relinquish control of their empire (1.139.3), and this would also have taken care of at least two of the demands of the second ultimatum – the lifting of the siege of Poteidaia and the restoration of autonomy to Aigina (1.139.1). The loss of their empire would also have had the effect of greatly reducing Athenian power, fear of which, if Thucydides is right, was the fundamental reason for the Spartans' going to war in the first place. The rescinding of the Megarian decree could also have been made a condition of any terms, and if the removal of Perikles was a serious aim, this would probably be accomplished, in any case, by Athens' defeat, since his fellow-countrymen were unlikely to forgive his leading them to such a disaster.

But to achieve all this, the Athenians had to be forced to accept Sparta's terms. If we are to believe Thucydides (1.80–5), King Archidamos had already warned that it would be impossible to defeat a sea power like theirs except at sea, and that this would require time to build up a navy with which to raise revolt in the Athenian empire. To acquire the necessary financial resources, he suggested winning over new allies among both Greeks and 'barbarians', i.e. the Persians, and he thought this might take two or three years. In the meantime, he specifically warned against rushing into invading Attica.

Thucydides says the Spartans did plan to send envoys to the king of Persia and to other foreign powers (2.7.1), and that they summoned friendly states in Italy and Sicily to build ships to bring their fleet up to a total of 500 and to provide financial help (2.7.2).¹ But in the meantime, having decided on war, there was little or nothing they could do but to ignore Archidamos' advice and fall back on the traditional strategy of ravaging the enemy's territory in the hope of bringing about a decisive battle. Archidamos had hinted that this strategy might fail (1.81), and because we know that it did, we may be tempted to think it was a waste of time. But in the speech Thucydides gives the king when his army assembled at the Isthmus,² he makes the perfectly sensible point that there was still a chance that the Athenians would fight when they saw their land being ravaged (2.11.6–8), and at least the Spartans were hitting the main target from the first. Nor should one underestimate the effects.

The case was different with the Athenians. Here again it is mainly in a speech – Perikles’ first – that Thucydides sets out their strategy, and it seems clear enough. They were to think of themselves as islanders, abandoning their land to the enemy, withdrawing inside the walls and on no account going out to fight (1.143.5; cf. 2.13.2). But what was their aim? Obviously such a strategy could not achieve the ‘defeat’ of Sparta in the same sense that the Spartans hoped to defeat Athens. Nor was this even likely to be achieved by the offensive operations we subsequently learn Perikles was prepared to undertake – hit-and-run raids round the Peloponnese and elsewhere (2.23.2, 25–6, 30, 2.56, 69), and twice-yearly invasions of the Megarid (2.31, 4.66.1). Most extraordinarily, Perikles appears only to have envisaged an obvious extension of the raids – establishing permanent bases on or off the coast of the Peloponnese – as a possible retaliation if the enemy tried to do this in Attica (1.142.2–5).

Perikles himself may have been deliberately evasive in defining his war aims, if we can trust the precise wording of something Thucydides has him say. What he hoped for, Perikles says (1.144.1), was ‘*periesesthai*’, and Thucydides uses the same word later (2.65.7) in summarizing his policy. The word can mean ‘to be superior to’ or ‘to win’, or it can simply mean ‘to survive’. Perhaps ‘to win through’ best preserves its ambiguity, and what Perikles meant was that by surviving the Athenians would win, since the Spartans would thereby fail to achieve their objective. The Athenians had not started the war and so victory meant the frustration of the enemy’s aim in starting it.

Some modern commentators accept this, and even suggest that there was no alternative and that the frustration of Spartan intentions might have led to the break-up of their alliance.³ But there were alternatives, as was shown in 425/4 and 420–418, and no strategy which left Spartan power essentially intact was likely to have any permanent effect on their control of their alliance, as what happened in the latter period was to show. Even if they had got tired of invading Attica and come back to the negotiating table, it would have solved nothing. Within a few years, one suspects, another Kerkyra incident, or another Poteidaia, would have again set the whole process in motion. If the Athenians were themselves to be secure and to retain control of their empire, they had so to weaken their enemies that they could no longer be a threat.

As we have seen, the war began, as far as Thucydides was concerned, with a Theban attack on Plataia, in the spring of 431, still ‘in time of peace’ (2.2.3). There is no hint, however, that the Spartans even knew of Theban plans, and, if anything, Thucydides suggests, they disapproved (cf. 7.18.2). Even the Thebans might not have tried it on had they not been invited to do so by sympathizers in Plataia itself, but they evidently considered the chance of securing control of the one place in Boiotia not in their league too good to miss.

Plataia was also near the Boiotian end of a relatively easy route from Attica to Boiotia, and the Boiotians may have been anxious to seal this end before war broke out, just as the Peloponnesians subsequently tried to seal its Attic end by their attack on Oinoe (2.18.2: see below). There is some evidence that at the

beginning of the war the inhabitants of some unwallled towns in Boiotia took refuge in Thebes (*Hell. Ox.* 17.3), and this may indicate that the Boiotians feared invasion, particularly if they were unaware of Perikles' strategy.⁴ If this was the case they may also have thought that Plataia might prove useful to an invader. On the other hand, Thucydides says that it was only after the Theban attack on Plataia that the Athenians arrested all Boiotians in Attica (2.6.2), and one would have thought that what Perikles had said in his reply to the final Spartan ultimatum (1.140–4) would have been known in Boiotia.

In the event, the attack on Plataia failed. With the aid of treachery, 300 Theban troops got into the city,⁵ but instead of taking the advice of those who had let them in and immediately seizing likely opponents, they issued a proclamation to all who wished Plataia to rejoin the Boiotian League to join them in the *agora*. As a result, the Plataians began to realize how few they were, and not only gathered in numbers by tunnelling through the connecting walls of houses to avoid being spotted, but barricaded the streets leading to the *agora*. At first the Thebans managed to defend themselves, but as the tumult swelled, and under a rain of tiles from women and slaves on the housetops, they eventually broke and were hunted through the streets until the survivors surrendered – an early example of the dangers of street-fighting.

Meanwhile, the main Theban army, which should have reached Plataia while it was still dark, had been delayed by the flooding of the Asopos. By the time it reached Plataia, the whole advance party had been killed or taken prisoner. The Thebans considered seizing as hostages any Plataians they could find outside the city, but the Plataians sent a herald, threatening to kill the prisoners if any harm was done to their fellow-citizens, but undertaking to release them if the Thebans withdrew. In one of the rare passages in which he gives alternative versions (2.5.5–6), Thucydides says that this was the Theban one, and that they claimed the agreement was ratified on oath. However, he says the Plataians claimed they only agreed to hand back the prisoners if negotiations were successful, and denied that there was any oath. As it turned out, the Thebans did retire, but the Plataians killed the prisoners. They then sent a messenger to Athens and handed the bodies back under truce. Diodoros (12.42.1) has yet another version, claiming that the Thebans did recover the prisoners.

The moment the Athenians heard what had happened, they arrested all the Boiotians in Attica, and sent a herald to the Plataians to tell them not to do anything irrevocable about the prisoners until they could consider the matter. Clearly they wished to secure them as hostages. But the herald arrived too late, so the Athenians sent a force of troops to Plataia, and, after provisioning and garrisoning the town, conveyed the non-combatants to Athens (2.6.2–4).

It was immediately after this incident, Thucydides says (2.10.1), that the Spartans ordered their allies to mobilize for an invasion of Attica, and in due course two-thirds of each ally's forces – which seems to have been the normal proportion for such a campaign – assembled at the Isthmus (2.10.2). Here Archidamos addressed the troops, warning them of the dangers of assuming that,

because of the size of their army, the Athenians would not come out to fight when they saw their land being ravaged (2.11). Then he sent one of the ambassadors who had taken the final ultimatum to Athens the previous year, Melesippos, to see whether, even now, the Athenians would agree to terms. They, however, refused even to admit him to the city, having already resolved, on Perikles' motion, not to receive any envoys once the Spartans had marched from their own territory. Escorted to the border to prevent his making contact with anyone, Melesippos left Athenian soil, remarking that the day would be the beginning of great evils for the Greeks (2.12.3).

After Melesippos' return, Archidamos finally ordered the invasion to begin, having now been joined by Boiotian contingents of both infantry and cavalry (2.12.4–5), while the Athenians, at Perikles' urging, evacuated the countryside and took refuge in the city, sending their sheep and cattle to Euboia and other islands (2.13–17), but continuing to occupy some strategic points, for example Oinoe, Rhamnous and, possibly, Eleusis.⁶ Even now, however, the Peloponnesian army did not take the direct route into Attica, first attacking Oinoe, on the Boiotian border (2.18.1–2).⁷ Archidamos was much criticized for taking this apparently roundabout route, following his speech against war in Sparta and the delay at the Isthmus (2.18.3–4). Thucydides reports the tradition that he delayed deliberately in order to give the Athenians time to think better of their intransigence (2.18.5), and this may well be true – it would certainly be in keeping with his reluctance to go to war in the first place and with Melesippos' mission. But it is probably going too far to explain his behaviour by any personal relationship he may have had with Perikles (cf. 2.13.1).⁸

One possibility that seems to have been overlooked is that the attack on Oinoe was concerted with the Boiotians, who may well have wanted the place captured in order to block a possible route from Attica to Boiotia, particularly now that their attack on Plataia had failed. In any case, the delay should not be exaggerated, since even after presumably several days had been spent on a fruitless attack on Oinoe, Thucydides says it was still only eighty days after the incident at Plataia that the invasion of Attica finally took place (2.19.1).

Thucydides does not go into detail about the attack on Oinoe, which he says had been walled, but he does say that siege-engines and other methods were used (2.18.1). The word he uses for 'siege-engines' – *mêchanai* – is equivocal, but here probably means 'battering-rams', as it evidently does later in the account of the far more elaborate siege of Plataia (2.76.4).⁹ But the attack on Oinoe proved a failure, like so many other assaults on walled towns and fortresses in this war. Lack of artillery meant that starving a place into surrender was usually the only successful method.¹⁰

Archidamos' first camp, after abandoning the attack on Oinoe, was near Eleusis. From here he ravaged both the immediate vicinity and the nearby Thriasian plain,¹¹ and here, too, the first engagement of the war took place when a detachment of Athenian cavalry was beaten off at a place called '*Rheitoi*' ('Streams': 2.19.2). Thucydides again gives no details, but the incident is a first

indication that Perikles' strategy was not entirely passive, even where Attica was concerned.¹² From Eleusis the Peloponnesian army moved to Acharnai, the largest deme in Attica, which Archidamos made his base for even more extensive ravaging.

Thucydides states that Archidamos' strategy was said to be not to move nearer to Athens on this occasion. Pressure from the Acharnians, who, he says (2.20.4), provided 3,000 hoplites to the Athenian army,¹³ might force the Athenians to risk a confrontation; if not, he could have more confidence in moving right up to the walls of Athens on future occasions. By then, he hoped, the Acharnians would be more reluctant to risk themselves for the property of others, when their own had been allowed to be devastated, and so enemy counsels would be divided (2.20).

What Thucydides says here has been criticized, because it implies that what Archidamos thought could be known, and because his view of how the Acharnians would react is belied by their apparent belligerence in Aristophanes' play *The Acharnians*, produced six years later (cf., e.g., lines 221ff.). Instead, it is suggested, Archidamos still hoped the Athenians might come to terms, or Thucydides is perhaps being ironical.¹⁴ But Thucydides could at least have found out what the Spartans later said about Archidamos, and the fact that the Acharnians continued to be belligerent, if it is a fact, is no proof that the king could not have thought otherwise; that he was not wrong in thinking that cracks in Athenian unity might appear is shown by what Thucydides says about their reaction to the ravaging (2.21). But Perikles was apparently able to ride out the storm by somehow preventing any formal discussion (2.22.1).¹⁵

He did, however, send out the cavalry from time to time to try at least to limit enemy depredations, and Thucydides mentions one particular engagement at a place called Phrygia, northwest of Athens towards Pentelikon, where a squadron of Athenian cavalry aided by some Thessalians clashed with Boiotian cavalry (2.22.2–4). Thucydides says the Athenians and Thessalians had the better of it 'until the hoplites came up to help the Boiotians' (2.22.2), and this is one of many passages that show that cavalry could not normally defeat hoplites unless the latter were caught at some kind of disadvantage.

Finally, when it became apparent that the Athenian army was not going to risk a confrontation, the Peloponnesian forces moved from Acharnai to attack some of the demes between Parnes and Brilessos (Pentelikon, now Pendeli), in the upper Kephissos valley. It may have been on this occasion that Dekeleia was spared, as Herodotos tells us it was (9.73.3). The easiest route from Attica into Boiotia runs this way – it is now followed by both the railway and the National Highway – and it was presumably by this route that the army retired into Boiotia by way of Oropos. Here it ravaged what Thucydides says was called 'the land opposite' (*tên gēn tēn peraiikēn kaloumenēn*: 2.23.3), meaning opposite Euboea.¹⁶ He does not tell us how long this invasion lasted, but the longest lasted forty days (in 430: 2.57.2), and since the first is not likely to have been particularly short, we can probably assume it lasted about a month.

After the Peloponnesians had left, the Athenians established guardposts by land and sea, intending to maintain them for the rest of the war, set aside 1,000 talents which were to be used only in the event of an attack by sea, and also decided to reserve the best 100 triremes each year for the same emergency. The reserve fund was not used until 412, though even then Athens was not under attack from the sea (8.15.1). The 100 ships were probably used in the winter of 429/8, when the Peiraieus was threatened (2.94.2), and again in the summer of 428 to deter another Peloponnesian naval threat to Attica (3.16.1). By the winter of 413/12 at the latest – when, following the disaster in Sicily, a new fleet had to be built from scratch (8.2.1) – the plan to retain 100 triremes in reserve each year had obviously been abandoned.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the Athenians launched the first of their seaborne operations. It consisted of 100 triremes, probably with just their usual complement of 1,000 hoplites and 400 archers (2.23.2).¹⁸ A record of the expenses paid to the commanders survives in an inscription (*IG* i³ 365.30ff.), which, as usual, gives their deme-names where Thucydides gives their patronymics; one of them, Proteas, had been among the commanders of the first squadron sent to aid Kerkyra (1.45.2). Probably somewhere off the south coast of the Peloponnese, they were joined by fifty ships from Kerkyra and other western allies (2.25.1).

Thucydides says that they caused damage to ‘other places’ before they attacked Methone, and Diodoros (12.43.1) records that they ravaged ‘Akte’ and burned its farmsteads, where probably the Argolid is meant, and, in particular, the territory of such allies of Sparta as Epidauros, Trozen and Hermione.¹⁹ But Methone (now Méthoni) was clearly the first real target. It lay on the southwest corner of the Akritas peninsula, some 8 miles (13 kilometres) from Pylos (Pilos, Navarino), and walls of the fourth century or later can still be seen incorporated in the remains of one of the great Venetian fortresses in the Peloponnese (Modon). Here the Athenians disembarked and attacked the weak wall which then existed, though there was apparently no garrison in the place.²⁰

At this point, however, there appeared on the scene the man who was to prove the most talented Spartan commander in the first ten years of the war, Brasidas. Thucydides says that he was in the area ‘with an expeditionary force’ (*phrouan echôn*: 2.25.2),²¹ and, realizing what was happening, came to Methone’s aid with 100 hoplites. He managed to break through the scattered Athenians, who were intent on the wall, though he lost some of his men on the way, and entered the town.

Cutting their losses, the Athenians continued round the coast to Elis, where they landed near Pheia (modern Katákolon), ravaged the area for two days and defeated a force of 300 picked troops from Elis itself and local levies. But then, when a wind got up, most of the Athenians re-embarked and sailed round the promontory called ‘the Fish’ (Ichthys, modern Akra Katákolou), to the harbour of Pheia itself, while the Messenians and some others marched overland to capture Pheia. When the fleet arrived, however, Pheia was abandoned, and the whole force continued on its way north, ravaging various places as it went (2.25.3–5).

Though unimportant in itself, the Pheia episode is perhaps significant for our understanding of Athenian strategy at this time. If the place was defensible, the Athenians could possibly have established a base there, supplying it by sea, and used it for exerting pressure on Elis, an ally of Sparta which had been disloyal in the past, and was to prove so again after the peace of Nikias (cf. 5.31.1–5, etc.). But the Athenians clearly had no intention of doing so, and this suggests that they would also have abandoned Methone, if they had managed to capture it, though it was certainly walled. In other words, the raids were intended just as hit-and-run operations.

But why, then, involve such large forces? Recently it has been suggested that even if the purpose was just ravaging, the more hands the better,²² and it is also possible that the intention was to relieve the overcrowding in Athens for a month or two. But neither of these explanations is altogether satisfactory, and they still leave one wondering what the ravaging was expected to achieve. Obviously there was an element of simple retaliation (cf. Plut., *Per.* 34.2), but it is hardly likely that ravaging necessarily restricted to coastal areas would have had any serious effect on Peloponnesian food supplies.²³ Perhaps more likely is that Perikles simply wanted to demonstrate the reach of Athenian power, despite anything the Spartans could do, in the hope that they would be brought all the more quickly to the negotiating table.²⁴

Sailing from Pheia, the Athenian fleet then captured Sollion, a town belonging to Corinth on the coast opposite Leukas, and handed it over to the local people, the Palairians, whose name is still preserved in the modern town of Páleros (2.30.1). On their return journey, the Athenians expelled the tyrant, Evander, from Astakos (still called by the same name), and brought the city into their alliance, though later in the same year the Corinthians restored Evander (2.33.1). From Astakos, the Athenians sailed to Kephallenia, which also joined their alliance without a fight (2.30.2). The Corinthian force which had restored Evander later landed at Kranai (now Argostóli), on Kephallenia, but withdrew after losing some men through treachery (2.33.3).

Meanwhile, the Athenians took certain precautions elsewhere. A squadron of thirty ships was sent through the Euripos to attack Thronion (now Palaiokastro eis ta marmara, some 3 miles (5 kilometres) west of Kámena Voúrla), and to guard Euboia; it also defeated a Lokrian force at Alope (now Arkítsa: 2.26.2).²⁵ It was presumably this squadron which is later (2.32) said to have fortified the island of Atalante (now Atalándi), off the coast of Lokris, to prevent Lokrian raids on Euboia. At about the same time, the Athenians expelled the inhabitants of Aigina and settled it themselves. The Spartans allowed some of the Aiginetans to occupy the Thyrea, the area round the modern Ástros (2.27).

More importantly, through their newly appointed *proxenos* (consul), Nymphodoros of Abdera, the Athenians negotiated an alliance with Sitalkes, a powerful Thracian chieftain, whose son was given the rare honour of Athenian citizenship (2.29.4–5), and became the butt of a joke by Aristophanes (*Acharnians*, 145–7). Perdikkas, king of Macedonia, was also reconciled to Athens through

Nymphodoros' good offices, and both he and Sitalkes now began to aid the Athenian forces still operating in Chalkidike.

Finally, in the autumn, the whole available Athenian army, including the troops from the 100 ships which had been raiding the Peloponnese and which had now returned, invaded the Megarid. This, like the raiding, was clearly in retaliation for the Peloponnesian invasion of Attica, but the Megarians, being neighbours, were particularly vulnerable, and there can be little doubt that the ultimate aim of this invasion and that of subsequent ones, conducted twice a year down to 424 (4.66), was at the very least to force them to negotiate a separate peace, if not to join the Athenian alliance. As we have seen, their territory spanned the Isthmus, and even their neutrality would presumably have denied invading Peloponnesian armies passage to Attica. Thucydides says this was the largest Athenian army ever assembled (2.31.2), and this, and the fact that it was commanded by Perikles in person (2.31.1), is a measure of how important the operation was in his eyes. The year ended with his delivering the celebrated 'Funeral Speech' in honour of the fallen in the first year of the war (2.34–46).

The second year of the war (430) began with a second Peloponnesian invasion of Attica, probably about the beginning of May (2.47.2). This time the ravaging went on for forty days, the longest time the Peloponnesians remained in Attica before the fortification of Dekeleia in 413 (2.57.2), and it extended over the whole country, including the plain around the city, and, in particular, the area of the Paralia, reaching down to Cape Sounion (2.55.1). This time, too, we hear of no attempts to intervene by the Athenian cavalry.

But the worst blow dealt the Athenians was only indirectly due to the Peloponnesian invasion. A few days after it had begun, a plague broke out, which continued to rage for some two years, and then, after a hiatus, broke out again in 427. Although the disease, whatever it was,²⁶ evidently came from overseas, since it started in the Peiraeus (2.48.1–2), it is likely that the overcrowding caused by the evacuation of the countryside made it more serious than it might otherwise have been. In connection with the later outbreak, Thucydides tells us (3.87.3), about 4,400 hoplites and 300 cavalry died in the two outbreaks. This represents about a third of the totals (cf. 2.13.6 and 8), and is confirmed by the statement that 1,050 of a force of 4,000 hoplites sent to Chalkidike also perished (2.58.3). Since there is no reason to believe that soldiers suffered worse than civilians – if anything, they might have been fitter and healthier – we can probably conclude that about a third or more of the Athenian population died. Thucydides' famous description of the plague (2.47.3ff.) also stresses the psychological effects, and although Perikles could not have been expected to foresee precisely what happened, if he was as well up in the contemporary medical literature as Thucydides appears to have been, he might have foreseen the likely consequences of the overcrowding to which his strategy had inevitably condemned his fellow-citizens.

While the Peloponnesian army was still in Attica, another force of 100 ships put to sea under Perikles' own command, on the second mass raid of the war. This time it carried a force of 4,000 hoplites, about the maximum 100 triremes could carry without modification, and 300 cavalry borne in special horse-transports made from converted old warships (2.56.1–2);²⁷ once at sea, the fleet was joined by 50 ships from Chios and Lesbos. Taking the hoplites and cavalry into account, this was the largest force assembled by Athens at any one time during the war – Thucydides expressly compares it with the force sent to Sicily in 415 (6.31.2) – and this has prompted speculation that Perikles' intention was something more than a mere raid, particularly in view of the attempt to capture Epidauros (2.56.4). It has been suggested that the plan was to take and hold Epidauros, possibly to establish easy communications with Argos, and so influence that city into joining Athens (cf. 5.53).²⁸

However, Thucydides' language about the attack on Epidauros – literally, he says, 'they came to a hope of taking it' (*es elpida men êlthon tou helein*: 2.56.4) – and the fact that ravaging apparently preceded it suggest that it was attempted on the spur of the moment. Nor do we hear of any siege-engines being used here, such as one might have expected if the assault had been part of the original plan. The subsequent abandonment of Prasiai rather implies that the intention was not to seize and hold places any more than in the previous year.

Nevertheless, to suggest that Epidauros would have been abandoned if it had been taken²⁹ is going too far. Though it would have required a relatively large garrison, it was too important a place to have been given up. The fifth-century city (Old Epidauros, Palaia Epidhavra) was a port – ferries now run to it from the Peiraeus – and so could be supplied by sea. Even if, in the end, it could not have been held if the Peloponnesians made a determined effort, its garrison could always have been evacuated, and the Peloponnesians might not have been prepared to invade Attica until it was recaptured.

After the unsuccessful attack on Epidauros, the fleet went on to ravage the territory of Trozen, Hermione and Halieis, and then took and burned Prasiai, a town of the *perioikoi* on the east coast of the Peloponnese (now Leonídon). From here a route leads westwards over the mountains into the vale of Lakadaimon itself (cf. Xen., *Hell.* 7.2.2–3), and the fact that the Athenians made no attempt to hold so strategically important a place indicates that the establishment of permanent bases on the coasts of the Peloponnese was still not on the agenda. Aristophanes refers to the plight of Prasiai in his play *The Peace* (lines 242–3), produced in 421.

After sacking Prasiai, the Athenian fleet returned home to find the Peloponnesians had gone. Thucydides says (2.57) that they had cut their invasion short for fear of the plague, but, as we saw, this was still the longest time they spent in Attica until 413. Later (3.26.2) he says that this invasion was also the most damaging, but it is difficult to know how much damage was actually inflicted. Thucydides himself believed that the occupation of Dekeleia in 413 created a much worse situation, and the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* claim that the earlier invasions did little harm (17.4–5).³⁰ Certainly the Laureion silver mines do not

seem to have been seriously affected, judging by Thucydides' silence on the subject, even though this second invasion was specifically directed at this area (2.55.1).

The extra numbers involved in the second seaborne raid may again have been intended to relieve the overcrowding in the city, but they may have been only incidental to the raid itself. The same forces were later sent on to Chalkidike under Hagnon (2.58.1), and it may be that it was primarily for this task that so large a number was assembled. The change of commanders may also be significant. Perikles would not have wanted to be away from Athens for too long. As it turned out, the arrival of even so large a reinforcement had little effect on the siege of Poteidaia, but Thucydides implies that at least initially it gave it a new impetus. He says the besiegers now used *mêchanai* (2.58.1: perhaps, again, battering rams), and tried 'in every way' to take the place. This may seem normal, but this is the first time that he mentions actual assaults: hitherto the Athenians seem to have been content merely to try to starve the city into surrender (cf. 1.64–5). The failure of the assaults was clearly also partly, if not mainly, due to the severe losses among Hagnon's men through plague – 1,050 out of 4,000 hoplites in forty days (2.58.3; cf. DS 12.46.3).

One might have expected so large a force as Perikles commanded to have gone on to emulate its predecessor's circumnavigation of the Peloponnese, but it may have been earmarked for Chalkidike, as suggested above, and he may have been anxious to return in case the second Peloponnesian invasion and the plague led to renewed opposition to his strategy, as turned out to be the case. So disillusioned were the Athenians that they sent ambassadors to Sparta, though they achieved nothing (2.59.2). Perikles was able to persuade them to continue with his strategy – it is here that Thucydides gives him his third and last speech (2.60–4) – but he was fined (2.65.3), and, though Thucydides does not say so, almost certainly removed from office (cf. DS 12.45.4; Plut., *Per.* 35.4). However, as Thucydides snidely remarks (2.65.4), 'as the mob loves to do', the people soon afterwards re-elected him *stratêgos*, probably at the elections for 429/8, in the spring of 429.³¹

It is at this point that Thucydides sums up Perikles' achievements (2.65.5–13), even though he lived until the autumn of 429 (2.65.6). We shall have cause to revert to this famous Thucydidean passage, but at this point it is worth noting that Perikles was still alive through most of the war's third campaigning season, though he may already have been a sick man (cf. Plut., *Per.* 38.1–2).

In the meantime, still in 430, the Spartans and their allies attacked Zakynthos with a fleet of 100 ships, the largest naval force they gathered in the first ten years of the war (2.66). Zakynthos lies opposite Elis and south of Kephallenia, which the Peloponnesians had attacked the previous year. Presumably the thinking behind these attacks was partly to bring the islands over to the Peloponnesian side as some kind of protection against further raids on the coast of Elis, but also to make access to the Gulf of Corinth easier and safer. The attack on Zakynthos was a failure, but this enemy activity in the west was probably behind the despatch of twenty Athenian ships to Naupaktos, in November.

Naupaktos lies on the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth, and had been captured by the Athenians in about 460. They had settled there the rebel helots the Spartans had allowed to leave Messenia under truce, at the end of the helot revolt (1.103.1–3). They were, naturally, fanatically loyal to Athens and had already joined the raid on Elis in 430 (2.25.4); they were to perform other sterling services during the war. The task of the Athenian squadron, which was commanded by Phormio, was to prevent ships' entering or leaving Corinth or the gulf (2.69.1).

In October, meanwhile, the Athenian alliance with Sitalkes of Thrace had borne further fruit. Peloponnesian envoys on their way to Persia had been arrested by Sitalkes' son, Sadokos, at the insistence of two Athenian ambassadors, and taken by the latter to Athens, where they had been executed. Thucydides says that this was in reprisal for the Spartan killing of any Athenians or allies of Athens they captured on merchant ships sailing round the Peloponnese. Indeed, he says that the Spartans killed anyone they captured at sea, perhaps on the assumption that they were bound to be trading with the enemy (2.67). The unfortunate Peloponnesian ambassadors included the Corinthian Aristeus, who had commanded the 'volunteers' sent by Corinth to help Poteidaia in 432, and three Spartans. They had been accompanied by the Argive Pollis, who, Thucydides says (2.67.1), had been acting in a private capacity. Argos had a peace treaty with Sparta at this time (cf. 5.14.4), and Pollis was presumably pro-Spartan. He may have offered to accompany the Spartan embassy because of Argos' traditional friendship with Persia (cf. Hdt. 7.150–2).

The episode shows the Spartans already trying to implement King Archidamos' advice to try to win allies among 'barbarians', and it is clear that, despite the unhappy outcome of this particular embassy, it was not the last. In 425, Thucydides tells us (4.50), a Persian ambassador was captured at Eïon on the Strymon on his way to Sparta with a letter from King Artaxerxes of Persia, and was taken to Athens. There the letter was translated and found to contain a reference to 'many envoys' from Sparta, all allegedly saying different things. In 430 the Spartans were also hoping to detach Sitalkes from Athens (2.67.1).

It was also in the winter of 430/29 that Poteidaia finally surrendered, though not before some of its inhabitants had been reduced to cannibalism (2.70.1). The terms were that the survivors be allowed to leave, with minimal property, and Thucydides says that it was the Athenian generals on the spot who made the agreement, because their troops were suffering from exposure, and because of the expense of the siege, already amounting to 2,000 talents (2.70). This is an indication that, for all Perikles' complacency about Athenian financial resources, they were already feeling the pinch. A further sign is the despatch of six ships to Karia at about this time, to collect funds and put a stop to the activities of Peloponnesian privateers in the area (2.69).³² The generals who had come to the agreement with Poteidaia were blamed for acting without the people's consent, though apparently not punished (2.70.4).³³ The Athenians replaced the original inhabitants of the city with 1,000 of their own citizens, if we are to believe Diodoros (12.46.7), but this was not the end of the war in Chalkidike.

When the campaigning season of 429 came round, instead of invading Attica, the Peloponnesians invested Plataia (2.71.1). Thucydides gives no explanation for this change of strategy, but it is possible that they were only too glad to avoid Attica, in view of the plague, and in any case had become fed up with invasions which had so far failed to draw out the Athenians. They may thus have been very willing to accede to Theban demands to eradicate the only place in Boiotia that was hostile to their league.³⁴

Thucydides' account of the siege of Plataia (2.75–8) provides by far the most detailed evidence for siege techniques at this time, and the contrast with the comparatively unsophisticated methods used by the Athenians at Poteidaia, Mytilene, Syracuse and elsewhere is surprising, particularly in view of the Athenians' apparent reputation for siege-craft (cf. 1.102.2 and Hdt. 9.70.2). The Peloponnesians first cut down fruit trees and constructed a palisade round the town to prevent anyone escaping. They then built a siege mound, probably in the form of a ramp, with a framework of logs, filled with stones, earth and anything else they could find.³⁵

The defenders responded by putting together a wooden wall which they placed on top of the existing wall and filled with bricks from nearby houses, the whole construction being protected against fire-arrows with skins and hides. They also broke through the wall where the mound came up to it and began to remove the earth from the lower levels. When the Peloponnesians filled the gap with clay wrapped in reed mats which could not be loosened in the same way, the defenders tunnelled under the mound and began to remove the earth from it through the tunnel, to the amazement of the besiegers, who found their mound not rising despite all their efforts. The defenders also built an inner wall, curving inwards from the original wall opposite the siege mound.

The besiegers, meanwhile, brought up battering-rams, one against the new, higher part of the wall opposite the siege mound, which succeeded in bringing much of it down, others elsewhere, which the defenders managed to lasso and so deflect. They also fastened beams with chains at each end at right-angles to cranes resting on and extending over the walls. Whenever a ram came near, they let the chains go and the beams fell on the projecting end of the ram, breaking it off.³⁶

In despair, the Peloponnesians prepared to build a more permanent wall round the town in order to starve it out, but first they made one last effort at a quick solution. Piling bundles of wood in the space between their mound and the city wall and as far as they could reach beyond it, they then set light to them with a mixture of pitch and sulphur. Thucydides says (2.77.5) the resulting fire made a large part of the city uninhabitable, and that the Plataians would not have survived if a wind had risen, as the besiegers had hoped. He adds that 'it is now said that a heavy downpour accompanied by thunder quenched the fire' (2.77.6), another example of his reporting a variant tradition.³⁷

After this final failure, most of the besieging army went home, while the rest completed the lines round the town, finishing them 'about the time of the rising of Arcturus' (2.78.2: i.e. about 20 September). They then left enough men to

guard half their wall and withdrew, leaving the Boiotians to guard the other half. Thucydides adds here that the garrison of Plataia now consisted of 400 Plataians, 80 Athenians and 110 bakerwomen (possibly slaves), the rest of the population having been evacuated to Athens before the siege began (2.78.3–4).

It is odd that while all this was going on the Athenians did not send out a fleet to raid the Peloponnese as they had done in 431 and 430, particularly since they did not have to face an invasion this year. It is possible that the cost of mounting such forays was becoming increasingly alarming, or the loss of life caused by the plague may have made it difficult to man a sufficient number of ships.³⁸ Perikles himself died at about the time the siege-works round Plataia were completed, and if he was already a sick man, this may also have inhibited any major undertaking.

As it was, the only operation Thucydides records is an attack on Spartolos in Chalkidike. This took place at the same time as the beginning of the siege of Plataia, ‘when the corn was ripening’ (2.79.1: i.e. in May). The surrender of Poteidaia had not ended the rebellion of Athens’ allies in the region, and the dispersal of its inhabitants will, if anything, have added strength to the rebel cause. The Athenians had some hopes that a pro-Athenian faction in Spartolos would make their task easy. The precise whereabouts of the place is unknown, but it lay a few miles northwest of Poteidaia and west of Olynthos, in the area known as Bottiaia.³⁹ The Athenian forces amounted to 2,000 citizen hoplites and 200 cavalry, commanded by Xenophon and two others – probably Hestiodoros and Phanomachos, who had been his colleagues at the time of Poteidaia’s surrender (cf. 2.70.1). Their hoplites will have been drawn from those they had commanded in the siege, and it later emerges that they also had some light troops (2.79.3), presumably recruited locally.

The Athenians advanced on the town, destroying its crops, but those opposed to Athens had sent to Olynthos for hoplites and other troops, including peltasts from ‘the area called Krousis’ (2.79.4), probably the coastal area running north-west from the vicinity of Spartolos itself. These now sallied, and although the Athenian hoplites defeated the Chalkidian hoplites, including the mercenaries with them, and drove them back inside the walls, the Chalkidian cavalry and light troops, including the peltasts from Krousis, defeated their Athenian counterparts before, presumably, also retiring within the walls.

Soon afterwards, some other peltasts arrived from Olynthos, and encouraged by this and their previous success, the light troops in the town again sortied, accompanied by the cavalry. What followed is an interesting example of the way in which trained light troops and cavalry, if properly handled, could defeat hoplites.⁴⁰ The peltasts from Krousis may well have been native Thracians, and even if they were not, they and those from Spartolos and Olynthos will probably have been relatively highly skilled since peltasts originated in Thrace. Chalkidian cavalry also seems to have been quite efficient, or at least they were by the fourth century (cf., e.g., Xen., *Hell.* 5.2.40ff.).

It was essential for such troops not to allow opposing hoplites to close. This had been the undoing of the Persians at Marathon and Plataia, for example. In

the battle near Spartolos, however, whenever the Athenians turned at bay, as they fell back on their baggage-train, the Chalkidians retreated. Then, as soon as the Athenians again started to retreat, they pressed them hard, hurling their javelins, while their cavalry also made repeated charges. In the end, fearing the cavalry in particular, the Athenians broke and fled to Poteidaia, losing 430 men and all three of their generals (2.79.6).

Not long afterwards, at the request of the people of Ambrakia (now Arta) and the natives in their hinterland, the Spartans made a determined effort to subjugate Akarnania, Athens' main ally in the northwest, apart from Kerkyra. Thucydides says that the Ambrakiots also had it in mind to overrun the islands of Zakynthos and Kephallenia to deny their use as bases to any Athenian fleets circumnavigating the Peloponnese, and even hoped to capture Naupaktos (2.80.1). The Spartans responded by ordering their allies to assemble a fleet, and meanwhile sent the navarch, Knemos, across the Gulf of Corinth with 1,000 hoplites, without his being observed by Phormio, the Athenian commander at Naupaktos. This is a good illustration of how easy it was for those with an inferior fleet to mount naval operations, if they were bold about it. In this case it is clear that Phormio could not maintain a constant patrol, because of the limitations of the trireme, but had to rely on learning of enemy movements in time to get his ships to sea and intercept.⁴¹

It is not certain where Knemos landed, but it was either at Leukas or at Ambrakia itself.⁴² Wherever it was, he was joined there not only by Greek troops from Ambrakia, Leukas and Anaktorion, but by several thousand local tribesmen (2.80.5–6). Thucydides says (2.80.7) that Perdikkas sent 1,000 Macedonians, without the knowledge of the Athenians, though they arrived too late.⁴³ Having assembled his forces, Knemos then marched on Stratos, the principal town of Akarnania. Its ruins can still be seen to the right of the main road from Agrinion to Arta, and about 8 miles (13 kilometres) from the former.

Knemos' army advanced in three widely separated divisions, he himself with the Peloponnesians and Ambrakiots on the left, the native troops in the centre and the Leukadians and Anaktorians on the right. But, although the Greek troops maintained good order and kept a lookout, the natives, and in particular the Chaonians, pressed forward, hoping to capture the town by a *coup de main* (2.81.4). This gave the Stratians their chance. They placed men in ambush at various points around the town and, when the Chaonians came within range, also made a sortie from the town itself. Many Chaonians were killed and the rest fled, carrying the remaining native troops with them.

The first their Greek allies knew about the disaster was when the fugitives reached them, but the two wings joined up and held their ground for the rest of the day. The Stratians did not dare to close since none of the other Akarnanians had yet come to their aid, but their slingers inflicted a number of casualties (2.81.5–8). When night fell, Knemos retreated southwards to Oiniadai (2.82), and thence, apparently, to Leukas (2.84.5), while his local allies dispersed.

It is easy to be critical of this operation, but it kept the initiative in the northwest in Spartan hands, and it is arguable that Knemos made the correct decision to withdraw. The capture of Stratos was never going to be easy, and troops such as the Chaonians were unlikely to be willing to take part in a prolonged siege. If things went wrong, Knemos might well have found himself cut off, miles from the safety of his ships. In the circumstances, it was better to withdraw, and it is noticeable that it was not this failure that the Spartans found worthy of criticism, but the failure of their fleet to deal with Phormio (2.85.1–2).

When the Akarnanians had first realized that they were about to be attacked, they had sent word to Phormio at Naupaktos. He had been unwilling to leave his base unguarded with an enemy fleet about to sail from Corinth (2.81.1). At about the same time as the battle near Stratos he encountered this fleet (2.83.1). With his twenty ships, he had been keeping watch over it as it coasted along the south shore of the gulf, hoping to fight it when it emerged into more open waters between Rhion and Antirrhion. The Peloponnesians, for their part, although their forty-seven ships were acting as transports rather than being cleared for action, assumed the Athenians would never dare attack them. After safely reaching Patrai (Patras), they slipped their moorings at night, but were still on their way across the gulf, perhaps hoping to land at the site of the modern Krionéri, when they saw the Athenians bearing down on them from that very direction (2.83.2–3).

They immediately formed all but five of their ships, bows outward, into as large a circle as they could without leaving gaps wide enough to allow the enemy to carry out the manoeuvre known as the '*diekplous*': rowing through the gaps. Inside the circle they kept the light craft and also their five fastest warships ready to go to any point on the circle that came under attack (2.83.5). These tactics are often compared with those supposedly adopted by the Greeks off Artemision in 480, but it is extremely unlikely that the 271 Greek ships at that battle can have formed a circle, and even less likely that the Persians would then have rowed round them. It is perhaps significant that Herodotos does not use the word 'circle' when describing the Greek formation at Artemision, and the two battles were on an altogether different scale.⁴⁴

The outcome was also different. In 429, Phormio's twenty ships *did* row round the circle of enemy ships in line-ahead, forcing it to contract by almost grazing their prows as they swept past, and threatening to turn and ram at any moment. Phormio was also waiting for the usual wind blowing from the gulf to add to the confusion as the enemy ships began to fall foul of one another (2.84.2–3). One wonders why the Peloponnesians did not attempt to ram the Athenians in the side as they crossed their bows, if they were as close as Thucydides implies, but perhaps they lacked the nerve to attack ships evidently so much faster and more manoeuvrable than their own.

When the wind came and the confusion was at its height, Phormio attacked. One of the enemy admirals' ships was 'sunk' at once,⁴⁵ and then several others,

before they broke and fled, losing a further twelve ships captured. Phormio's triumph was complete. The remaining Peloponnesian ships eventually made for the Eleian shipyard at Kyllene (probably the modern Killíni),⁴⁶ where they were joined by Knemos and his ships from Leukas (2.84.3–5).

The Spartans now sent three 'advisers' (*xumbouloi*: 2.85.1), including Brasidas, to urge Knemos to prepare to renew the fight.⁴⁷ Thucydides says that since the previous battle had been their first experience of an engagement at sea, the Spartans could not understand how their fleet had come to be outfought by one so much smaller. They thought the reason must have been lack of spirit, not realizing how far superior the Athenians were because of their long experience at sea, compared with their own brief training (2.85.1–2).⁴⁸ But at least the advisers had the sense to ask Sparta's naval allies for more ships, and this time to clear those they already had for action (2.85.3). Phormio sent to Athens to announce his victory and to ask for reinforcements himself, but it was typical of Athenian complacency that not only were a mere twenty more ships sent, but they were ordered first to go to Crete, to help the obscure town of Polichna against its neighbour, Kydonia (now Chaniá: 2.85.4–6).⁴⁹

Meanwhile, having collected 77 ships,⁵⁰ and readied them for action, the Peloponnesians sailed from Kyllene to Panormos about 2 miles (3.2 kilometres) east of Rhion (cf. Pausanias 7.22.7) and more or less opposite Naupaktos (cf. Polybios 5.102.9), where they were joined by the Peloponnesian army. But when Phormio moved to what Thucydides calls the 'Molykrion Rhion' (2.86.2), that is Antirrhion on the Akarnanian shore, opposite Rhion in the Peloponnese, the Peloponnesians moved in turn to Rhion. For six or seven days the two fleets remained in these positions, practising and preparing for battle. As Thucydides says (2.86.5), the Peloponnesians were wary of moving out into the open water to the west, while Phormio was unwilling to fight in the comparatively narrow waters to the east, the reason being that open water suited the faster and more manoeuvrable Athenian galleys.

But the Peloponnesian commanders were also anxious to fight before Phormio received reinforcements, and eventually, after trying to encourage their men (2.87), they put to sea at dawn and rowed eastwards into the gulf, in four parallel lines ahead. Their plan was to lure Phormio into following them because of the possible threat to Naupaktos, and they had their twenty fastest ships in the van, in the hope that they might be able to cut him off from his base, when they turned to engage him (2.90.1–2). Their move thus nullified at a stroke much of the argument that Phormio had allegedly used to encourage his men, when he realized that they were alarmed at the enemy numbers.

The speech Thucydides gives him (2.89) is the classic exposition of advanced trireme tactics, and it is possible that he derived the gist of it from Phormio himself.⁵¹ Partly he argued, in relatively conventional terms, that numerical superiority could not compensate for lack of skill, but he also promised that he would not fight inside the gulf, because lack of sea-room did not suit Athenian tactics. The Athenians would not be far enough away to see how best to ram, or

to turn away if need be, and it would not be possible to employ the *diekplous* or the *anastrophē*. Instead, the battle would become just like one on land (2.89.8). In other words, the Athenians' helmsmen would not have room to steer their ships between opposing enemy vessels, thus avoiding a potentially damaging head-on collision, and so would not be able to break through the enemy line (the *diekplous*) and then turn (the *anastrophē*) to ram from astern.

However, as was said above, by moving into the gulf as though to threaten Naupaktos, the enemy forced Phormio to do what he had promised his men he would not do (2.90.3), and he was lucky this time to escape without total defeat. Seeing his twenty ships strung out in line-ahead close to the opposite shore, the Peloponnesians suddenly turned to port and bore down on them. The leading eleven Athenian ships managed to escape, but the remaining nine were driven ashore, and but for the presence of Messenian troops from Naupaktos, who had followed Phormio to Antirrhion by land, all nine would have been lost. As it was, one was captured with its crew, and others were towed away after their crews had either swum ashore or been killed, though some were rescued by the Messenians, who clambered aboard and fought the Peloponnesians off from the decks (2.90.4–6).

Meanwhile, the remaining eleven Athenian ships had made for Naupaktos with the twenty fast ships from the Peloponnesian right wing in hot pursuit. Ten of the Athenians made it safely into harbour, and took station near a temple of Apollo, with prows facing outwards, ready to fight. But the last Athenian ship, finding itself closely followed by a Leukadian vessel, rounded a merchant vessel anchored offshore and rammed the Leukadian amidships. This caused a panic among the remaining nineteen pursuing ships, and some dropped oars to let the rest catch up – as Thucydides says (2.91.4), a foolish thing to do with the enemy so close – while others ran aground in ignorance of the coast. Encouraged by this, the other ten Athenian ships swept out to re-engage, and, after a brief resistance, the Peloponnesians fled. Before they could escape, they lost six of their own ships, and also the Athenian ships they had previously captured, which were presumably cast off by the ships towing them (2.91–92.2). An Athenian thank-offering for a naval victory found at Dodona (SIG³ 73), may commemorate this victory, and Phormio's name is now perpetuated in the name of one of the streets leading to the modern harbour of Naupaktos.

Soon after their defeat, fearing the arrival of Athenian reinforcements, which did, indeed, soon arrive, the Peloponnesian fleet withdrew to Corinth, except for the Leukadian ships, which went home (2.92.6–7). But nothing demonstrates Peloponnesian resilience better than the fact that, before dispersing, the sailors from the defeated fleet made an audacious raid on Salamis itself (2.93–4). Thucydides says that at the suggestion of the Megarians, Knemos and Brasidas originally planned to attack the Peiraeus because it was unguarded, due to Athens' immense superiority at sea. Each man was to take his oar,⁵² cushion and rowlock-thong, and go to Megara on foot. There they were to launch and man the forty ships at Nisaia.

As it turned out, though they launched the ships at night, they decided not to make for the Peiraeus but for ‘the promontory of Salamis looking towards Megara’ (2.93.4), later named Boudoron (2.94.3), where there was an Athenian fort and three triremes, supposedly to prevent ships entering or leaving Nisaia. Boudoron is almost certainly the northernmost of the three western peninsulas of Salamis, and the Athenian fort has been identified with the remains of walls overlooking the bay of Ayios Geórgios to the south.⁵³

Thucydides says (2.93.4) that the reason for the change of plan was that the Peloponnesians became afraid of the danger: he adds that ‘a wind is also said to have prevented them’, but later (2.94.1) that the wind would not have prevented them if they had not lost their nerve.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the attack on Salamis caused a panic in Athens when fire-signals warning of it were seen, and the raiders were able to retire to Nisaia with their plunder, prisoners and the three triremes from Boudoron (2.94.3), before Athenian relieving forces arrived. Thucydides adds that the Peloponnesians were worried about the state of their ships, which had been in the water for some time and were leaking (2.94.3).⁵⁵

After a digression on events in Thrace and Macedonia (2.95–101), Thucydides ends his narrative of events in the year 429 with an account of an intervention by Phormio in Akarnanian affairs (2.102). He now had forty ships after the arrival of the long-awaited reinforcements from Crete, and with these he sailed to Astakos. There he took the 400 Athenian hoplites from his ships, and with 400 additional Messenian hoplites from Naupaktos marched inland to Stratos and a place called Koronta (whereabouts unknown). From these and other places he expelled various people not regarded as ‘sound’ (2.102.1), then returned to Naupaktos, and, in the spring of 428, to Athens.

Presumably the Athenians felt that after Phormio’s two victories and the dispersal of the enemy fleet, it was no longer necessary to keep a squadron in the Gulf of Corinth. But in view of their continuing naval strength one cannot help but feel that they should have maintained a permanent naval presence there. This withdrawal from the west, coupled with the failure to raid the Peloponnese this year, is a fitting end to the essentially defensive strategy they had hitherto pursued under Perikles’ aegis. The next few years were to see a different strategy, and one which brought them closer to victory than perhaps at any other time in the war.

INTERLUDE

Thucydides begins his account of the fourth year of the war (428) with a brief summary of the third Spartan invasion of Attica, ‘at the same time as the corn was ripening’, about the middle of May. He has already told us that the longest invasion lasted forty days (2.57.2), so we can assume this one lasted for less, but all he says is that the invaders stayed as long as they had food (3.1.3). Since he also remarks on the effectiveness of the Athenian cavalry in confining enemy light troops to base on this occasion, though he implies that it had also been active during previous invasions (3.1.2),¹ we may conclude that the invaders more or less had to make do with the provisions they brought, and that these did not last long.

Later he says that the Athenians had readied forty ships for another raid round the Peloponnese (3.3.2). This was a smaller fleet than those sent out in the first two years, but, coupled with the increased activity of the cavalry, at least shows some recovery of the offensive spirit so lacking in 429. But then the situation was completely changed by the revolt of most of Lesbos. This was the first revolt by allies of the Athenians since the war began, and hit them in their tenderest spot. Since the suppression of Samos in 439, the Lesbians, along with the Chians, were the only allies to retain their own ships, and not only had Lesbian ships participated in the great raid on the Peloponnese in 430 (2.56.2), but ten of them were even now serving with the Athenian fleet (3.3.4).

Thucydides says the Lesbians had been in the mood for revolt before the war, but had been discouraged by the attitude of the Spartans (3.2.1).² Now they had to make their move before they were ready. They had intended to wait until they had blocked their harbours, built walls and more ships, and received archers and supplies from the Black Sea region. But although the Athenians had originally ignored warnings from loyalists on Lesbos and nearby Tenedos,³ they had eventually sent envoys to Mytilene, Lesbos’ principal city, to deliver an ultimatum, which had been rejected. Now they sent the forty ships intended for the raid round the Peloponnese, hoping to catch Mytilene by surprise, as its citizens celebrated a festival of Apollo outside the walls. If they failed to achieve surprise, the fleet’s commanders were to order the Mytileneans to hand over their ships and demolish their walls on threat of war (3.3.1–3).

Although the ten Mytilenean triremes serving with the Athenian fleet were seized and their crews imprisoned, news of the departure of the forty Athenian ships still reached Mytilene. It was brought by a man who made his way to Geraistos in Euboea, and there picked up a merchantman bound for Lesbos (3.3.5). This episode, for which there are many parallels,⁴ is a good example of how different ancient warfare often was from more recent conflicts. Security at this level was not part of ancient military consciousness. The result on this occasion was that the Mytileneans did not go out to celebrate their festival, but hurriedly strengthened their incomplete fortifications with temporary palisades, and waited for the Athenians to arrive (3.3.5).

On arrival, the Athenian commanders delivered the ultimatum, and when it was rejected commenced operations. However, after a tentative sortie from the city had been driven back, a truce was concluded to allow time for envoys to be sent to Athens, since the Athenians did not feel strong enough to deal with the whole of Lesbos. But in addition to the ship bearing the envoys, the Mytileneans also sent another to ask for help from Sparta. Typically, this second ship managed to evade the Athenian fleet, which was moored north of the city.⁵

After the failure of the Mytilenean mission to Athens (3.4–5.1), hostilities on Lesbos recommenced with a Mytilenean attack on the Athenian base. This was not unsuccessful, but the Mytileneans lacked the confidence to remain outside the walls (3.5.2). Thucydides gives no explanation for this, and one might have thought the Mytileneans enjoyed at least a numerical advantage so close to home. He does not say how many Athenian troops there were, but the normal complement of 40 triremes would only have been 400 hoplites and 160 archers, and the Mytileneans surely had more than that. However, the Athenian ships may have carried more hoplites than usual – 1,600 was probably the maximum number (cf. 2.56.2) – and reinforcements may already have arrived from Methymna, the one loyal city on Lesbos, and from Imbros, Lemnos and other allies in the vicinity (cf. 3.5.1). For the time being, at any rate, the Mytileneans were content to wait for help from the Peloponnese and elsewhere. They were encouraged to send another trireme to the Peloponnese, to ask for help, by two men who had managed to reach the city by sea after the battle, one from Thebes, the other described by Thucydides as ‘Meleas the Lakonian’ (3.5.2), who may have been a *perioikos*.⁶

The Athenians were also encouraged by the enemy’s inactivity to move their fleet to the south of the city, and to fortify two camps, one on either side of it, to watch both its harbours. At that time, the wooded promontory on which the Genoese castle now stands, and which formed the acropolis of the ancient city, was divided from the mainland by a channel joining the two harbours Thucydides mentions here (3.6.1).⁷ The Athenians controlled only the area round their camps, but because they had bottled up the Mytilenean fleet in its harbours, they were able to maintain contact with ships and supplies from elsewhere (3.6.2).

Meanwhile, on Spartan advice, the first Mytilenean envoys went to Olympia, at the time of the Games of 428, that is in August,⁸ to make a general appeal for

help. So there was probably some delay between their arrival and the appeal, but the Spartans were not necessarily dragging their feet. Rather, they probably thought the Olympic Games an appropriate venue for the appeal. As a result of it, the Spartans and their allies concluded an alliance with the Lesbians in revolt, and agreed to their request for a second invasion of Attica, ordering the usual two-thirds of each state's forces to assemble at the Isthmus. At the same time, perhaps encouraged by their raid on Salamis, they set about preparing slipways for dragging warships across the Isthmus, with the idea of attacking Attica this time by both land and sea (3.15.1).⁹ But although the Spartans were eager enough, their allies were more reluctant because of getting in the harvest and general war-weariness (3.15.2). The harvest in question would have been grapes and olives, not grain, which would already have been collected. The allied attitude here is a reminder that all Greek armies, except the Spartan, were composed of levies from the farming population. The Spartans themselves were not farmers, but had helots to do such work for them.

The Athenians reacted vigorously to the threat. They manned 100 triremes (presumably the reserve of 2.24.2), and not only demonstrated off the Isthmus, but made descents on the Peloponnesian coast, while 30 ships which had been sent out earlier under Phormio's son, Asopios, ravaged the seaboard of Spartan territory itself (3.7.1–2; 16.2). This vivid demonstration of continued Athenian naval strength, coupled with the obvious reluctance of Sparta's allies, was enough to put paid to the grand design of an attack on Attica by land and sea, though later the Spartans did prepare to send a fleet of forty ships under Alkidas to go to the aid of Lesbos (3.16).¹⁰

At about the same time as the Spartans were making preparations at the Isthmus, the Mytileneans and their supporting forces attacked Methymna without success, and then went on to 'set things on a firmer footing' (3.18.1) – probably a euphemism for a purge of pro-Athenian elements – at Antissa, Pyrrha and Eresos, where they also strengthened the walls. After they had gone home, the Methymnians retaliated by attacking Antissa, but suffered severely when the defenders sortied (3.18.2).¹¹ The Athenian response to this clear indication that they had too few troops on Lesbos was to send another 1,000 hoplites under Paches, in ships they rowed themselves.¹² On arrival, they built a single wall round Mytilene to cut it off by land as well as by sea (3.18.3–5).

It has been suggested that it was shortage of men which led to the hoplites rowing themselves, rather than shortage of funds, but this is unlikely.¹³ The Athenians had just manned 100 ships, and so obviously still had the manpower. The point, surely, was that 1,000 hoplites, rowing themselves, would require only six triremes, whereas 1,000 hoplites carried on deck would have required at least twenty-five.¹⁴ That the Athenians were in financial difficulties is shown by Thucydides' statement that they now resorted to a capital levy (*eisphora*), and also sent twelve ships to collect funds from the allies (3.19.1).¹⁵

During the winter of 428/7 there also occurred an episode which, although unimportant in itself, is the subject of one of Thucydides' most exciting pieces

of narrative – the breakout of part of the garrison of Plataia (3.20–4). The original idea was for the whole garrison to try to escape, but about half lost their nerve and the attempt was eventually made by 220 men. In order to make ladders of the right height, they counted the number of bricks in the enemy wall surrounding the city, and then calculated the height of the wall from the thickness of the bricks. In fact, there were two walls with ditches along the outer edges, living accommodation in between and towers every ten merlons spanning both walls. At night, when it rained, the besiegers retired to these towers.

In view of this, the escapers chose a windy, rainy and moonless night. They were lightly armed and wore sandals only on the left foot to give them a firm footing in the mud, Thucydides says (3.22.2), though it has been suggested that it was really for religious reasons.¹⁶ Aiming for a stretch of wall between two towers, they crossed the ditch in front of the inner wall and placed their ladders against it. Then twelve men armed with knives climbed up, six going to each tower. Next came more men with javelins, but without their shields, which were carried by others behind them. So far they had escaped notice, but now one of them knocked a tile off one of the merlons, and the alarm was raised. But, as the besiegers began to turn out, the remaining members of the garrison made a sortie from the opposite side of the city, and this threw the besiegers into confusion. Similarly, when the besiegers tried to signal towards Thebes with torches, the Plataians also lit torches in the city to cause confusion.

The escapers now seized the towers on either side of the stretch of wall they were trying to cross, to stop any besiegers getting through, while those who had already crossed waited at the edge of the outer ditch and kept the besiegers away with arrows and javelins. When all the rest had crossed, those in the towers came down, and the whole party congregated at the ditch, where they fought off an attack by 300 of the besiegers who had been set aside for just such an emergency. They could be seen by the light of the torches they were carrying, whereas the escaping party was in darkness.

The escapers then crossed the ditch, though the freezing water almost came up to their heads, and set off on the road towards Thebes further to confuse the enemy, who would naturally assume that they were making for Athens. They could even see their would-be pursuers with their torches, haring off towards the Dryoskephalai pass across Kithairon. Finally, having passed the shrine of Androkrates, near which the Greeks had encamped at the battle of Plataia in 479, and kept going for half a mile (800 metres) or so, they turned back towards Kithairon, and eventually 212 of them made their way safely to Athens.¹⁷

Early in 427, the Peloponnesians finally sent the forty ships they had readied for Mytilene (3.26.1), having already sent an officer called Salaithos. He had been landed by trireme at Pyrrha, and from there had made his way on foot to Mytilene, getting through the Athenian lines along the bed of a stream. His arrival, and the news of the forty ships he brought, had given the Mytileneans the confidence to hold out through the winter (3.25.1–2). The Peloponnesians

also invaded Attica for the fourth time, doing more damage, Thucydides says (3.26.3), than in any other of their invasions except the second, with the idea of deterring the Athenians from sending any further forces to Lesbos.

Nevertheless, in the end, Mytilene was compelled to come to terms. Thucydides explains that Salaithos, in despair at the non-arrival of the forty ships, took the gamble of issuing arms to the ordinary people of the city with a view to making a mass sortie. The people, however, were in a mutinous state. As so often in sieges, there were suspicions that the wealthy were hoarding food while ordinary folk starved, and they threatened to come to terms with the Athenians unless this food was distributed.¹⁸ The authorities, fearful of being left out of any agreement, then themselves came to terms with the Athenian commander, Paches.

In effect, the terms amounted to unconditional surrender. The Athenian army was to be admitted into the city, and the lives of Mytilene's people were guaranteed only until the outcome of an embassy to Athens was known. So fearful were the leading pro-Spartans, indeed, that they sought asylum at the altars, and although Paches persuaded them to leave, promising they would come to no harm, he nevertheless imprisoned them on Tenedos. Among other measures, he also sent a naval force to capture Antissa (3.27–8).

Meanwhile, the forty Peloponnesian ships had been slow even in rounding the Peloponnese, and although they escaped detection until they reached Delos, when they reached Ikaros they heard the news that Mytilene had fallen. Wanting to get more reliable information, they went on to Embaton, somewhere on the coast of the territory of Erythrai (modern Ildır: 3.29.1–2), and here their commander, Alkidas, was urged to proceed at once to Mytilene to try to retake the city while the situation was still confused. Alkidas, however, rejected both this plan and suggestions that he should establish a base in Ionia or Aiolis to encourage Athens' allies to revolt (3.30–1). Instead, he decided to return home as soon as possible, and turned south down the coast to Cape Myonessos (now Doganbey Burun), where he massacred most of the prisoners taken on the voyage. From there he went on to Ephesos, where, in response to protests from Samians who had taken refuge at Anaia on the mainland opposite Samos after the Samian revolt from Athens in 440/39,¹⁹ he at least agreed to release some of the Chian prisoners he held (3.32).

Although nothing can excuse Alkidas' stupidly brutal behaviour, it is arguable that his decision to go home was right. With only forty ships, he could not really hope to fight even the Athenian fleet at Mytilene, and if he had established a base in Asia Minor, he might soon have found himself trapped. Nor is it at all certain that he would have received any support from the Persians. It was the destruction of the Athenian fleet in Sicily which eventually encouraged them to join on Sparta's side, and even then they were hardly wholehearted.²⁰

Before Alkidas and his fleet had reached Ephesos, when they were anchored off Klaros to the northwest, they had been spotted by the *Salaminia* and the *Paralos*, the two Athenian state galleys, and Alkidas now set off home across the open sea,

to avoid being seen (3.33.1). Reports of his presence had reached Paches from Erythrai and elsewhere, and from the two Athenian ships, and the latter set out in pursuit, but turned back at Patmos (3.33.2–3).

On his way back to Mytilene, Paches put in at Notion, the port of Kolophon, where most of its population had taken refuge in 430, when a faction called in Persian support. But there had been further unrest in Notion itself, and one side had walled itself off in a separate part of the town and obtained Arcadian and native mercenaries from the local Persian satrap, Pissouthnes. Now the other party asked Paches for help, and he lured the mercenary commander, Hippias, to a parley, on promise of safe conduct. He then seized him, made a sudden attack on the wall and, after taking it and killing the mercenaries inside, took Hippias back and had him executed by a squad of archers (3.34.1–3). Paches then restored Notion to the pro-Athenian Kolophonians (3.33.4) and returned to Lesbos. There he subdued Pyrrha and Eresos, the remaining rebel towns, and also captured the Spartan Salaithos, hiding in Mytilene. With the prisoners held on Tenedos, he was sent to Athens, where he was later executed, and Paches also sent most of his forces home, remaining with the rest to settle affairs on Lesbos (3.35).

Meanwhile, in Athens, it was decided to execute not merely Salaithos and the Mytileneans who had been sent to Athens with him, but the whole adult male population, and to sell the women and children as slaves. A trireme was sent to tell Paches what to do (3.36), but next day there was a change of heart, and at a second debate the order was rescinded. Another trireme was immediately sent to countermand the first order, and, rowing night and day, managed to reach Mytilene in time (3.36.4–5 and 49).

The speeches Thucydides gives to the chief protagonists in the second debate, Kleon and Diodotos (3.37–40 and 42–8),²¹ are among the most famous in his whole work, and it is here that he chooses to introduce Kleon, who, he tells us (3.36.6), was the man who had proposed the original punishment and was ‘in other ways the most forceful of the citizens and at that time the most influential with the people’. Unfortunately, he neglects to tell us how Kleon had come to be so influential, and, as we shall see, only spasmodically reintroduces him later. So we are left to piece together his background and previous career from other sources. We know that his father, Kleainetos (3.36.5), financed the production of a play in 460 (*Syll.*³ 1078), and this shows that Kleon at least came from a wealthy family. He may already have become prominent as early as 440,²² and have been among Perikles’ critics at the beginning of the war (*Plut., Per.* 33.6–7). At the time of the Mytilenean debate, he was possibly a member of the council of Five Hundred,²³ but his importance, as with all Athenian politicians in his day, lay in his ability to sway the assembly. On this occasion, it is worth noting, he went against the tide and lost.²⁴

Despite their last-minute concession to common humanity, the Athenians still executed the Mytileneans whom Paches had sent to Athens, on Kleon’s motion. They amounted to more than 1,000 men (3.50.1).²⁵ In addition, Mytilene’s

walls were demolished and the entire territory of the island, except for that of Methymna, confiscated. It was parcelled out into 3,000 land-lots, 300 of which were assigned to the gods, the remainder to Athenian settlers, to whom the Lesbians had to pay rent for the privilege of cultivating their own land. It is uncertain how long the settlers remained on the island, but they may have stayed there, acting, in effect, as a garrison, until the end of the war.²⁶ The mainland towns that had belonged to Mytilene were also now incorporated into the Athenian alliance as ordinary tribute-paying members (3.50.2–3).

From the settlement of Lesbos, Thucydides passes immediately to the Athenian capture of Minoa, an island off Megara. In itself this was a minor operation, but it was possibly the forerunner of a major change in Athenian strategy: the establishment of permanent bases on and off the enemy coasts. Significantly, perhaps, Thucydides also here introduces another man who was to be of considerable importance until his death fourteen years later: Nikias, son of Nikeratos (3.51). If Thucydides is right, the intention behind the capture of Minoa was still largely defensive – to blockade the Megarian port of Nisaia – but it was later used for an attack on Nisaia and on Megara itself (4.67), and its capture was at the very least an aggressive extension of Perikles' strategy.

The topography is not quite certain, since the site of Nisaia has never been securely established, and there is no island now that seems to fit Thucydides' Minoa. However, Nisaia in all probability lay on the site of either the modern Paliókastro or of Ayios Geórgios, on the coast south of Megara, and Minoa was probably what is now the promontory called Teicho to the east.²⁷ If this is right, one can see why Nikias regarded Boudoron on Salamis as an unsatisfactory base from which to blockade Nisaia, as Thucydides says he did (3.51.2). Minoa would have blocked the view of Nisaia from Boudoron, and we should as usual remember that triremes could not remain at sea permanently to maintain a blockade, but needed a base near by.

Thucydides' account of the operation is also unclear,²⁸ but what he probably means is that there were two 'towers' covering the entrance to the channel between Nisaia and Minoa, and that Nikias first had to take these. Presumably he then demolished them before constructing a wall on the island where it came nearest to the channel. It is also unclear exactly how Nikias took the two towers. Thucydides says that it was with 'engines from the sea' (*mêchanais ek thalassês*: 3.51.3), but it is not certain what these were. By '*mêchanai*' he usually seems to mean battering-rams (cf. 2.18.1 and 3.76.4), but scaling-ladders are another possibility, or even light, wooden towers. It would possibly be difficult to use the first from a ship, but Marcellus used giant ladders called *sambukai*, mounted on ships, in his assault on Syracuse in 213 (Polybios 8.4.1ff.), and something of the sort may have been used by Nikias here. Whatever the *mêchanai* were, Nikias' use of them may be alluded to in Aristophanes' play *The Birds* (line 363), produced in the spring of 414.²⁹

This same summer also saw the end of Plataia, when lack of food forced the garrison to surrender (3.52.1). Perhaps to balance his picture of Athenian savagery

in the case of Mytilene, Thucydides again gives us two speeches, one by the Plataians (3.53–9), the other by the Thebans (3.61–7).³⁰ Here, however, the pleas of the Plataians did them no good, and all 200 who were left, along with 25 Athenians, were executed, while the women who had remained with them were sold (3.68.2). The city was originally given to some Megarian exiles and pro-Theban Plataians, but was later razed to the ground and its territory leased to Thebans (3.62.3).

Meanwhile, the Spartan fleet returning from Lesbos had been scattered by a storm off Crete, but had eventually made its way piecemeal to Kyllene. Here it found thirteen triremes from Leukas and Ambrakia, and Brasidas, again appointed as an adviser, this time to Alkidas (3.69.1). The Spartan intention was to send the combined fleet to Kerkyra, where civil war had broken out, before the twelve Athenian ships at Naupaktos were reinforced (3.69.3). The details of the civil war need not concern us, though Thucydides' account of it (3.70–85, 4.46–8) and particularly his use of it to analyse the phenomenon of civil war in general (3.82–3) are justifiably famous.³¹ What mainly matters is that Kerkyra was effectively knocked out of the war. The alliance with the island had never been of much benefit to Athens, but fifty ships from Kerkyra had participated in the first raid round the Peloponnese (2.25.1), and fifteen took part in an attack on Leukas in 426 (3.94.1).

In any case, Athens certainly did not want to see Kerkyra pass into the enemy camp, and had intervened on behalf of the Kerkyraian democrats, sending Nikostratos with the twelve ships and 500 Messenian hoplites from Naupaktos (3.75.1). He at least had behaved with some moderation, attempting to reconcile the warring parties (3.75.2), and he and his squadron were still there when the Peloponnesian fleet of fifty-three ships, commanded by Alkidas, with Brasidas as adviser, arrived (3.76).

The Kerkyraians managed to man sixty ships, but two of them promptly deserted to the enemy and fighting broke out on some of the others. Thus the Peloponnesians were able to detach a mere twenty ships to deal with the Kerkyraians, while the remaining thirty-three concentrated on the twelve Athenians (3.77). The latter, however, included both the *Salaminia* and the *Paralos* (3.77.3),³² crack galleys manned entirely by Athenian citizens (cf. 8.73.5), and, presumably because of its superior speed and manoeuvrability, the Athenian squadron somehow contrived to attack one wing of the enemy fleet, 'sinking' one ship. Thereupon the Peloponnesians immediately formed circle, and the Athenians began to row round them, as they had done when facing Phormio for the first time in 429 (3.78.1–2). At this point, however, the rest of the Peloponnesian fleet managed to disengage from the Kerkyraians and come up in support. This was too much even for the Athenians, and they began to back away, keeping their rams presented to the enemy. The whole incident was, if anything, an even more extraordinary demonstration of Athenian skill and the fear this instilled than Phormio's earlier exploits. But, for all their expertise, the Athenians could not prevent the capture of thirteen Kerkyraian ships (3.79.2).³³

Next day, after the Peloponnesian fleet had spent the night at its anchorage off Sybota, Brasidas urged a direct attack on the city of Kerkyra, but was overruled. Instead, the Peloponnesians landed at Cape Leukimme and ravaged the surrounding area, before retiring. At nightfall they were informed by fire-signals of the approach of sixty more Athenian ships from the direction of Leukas, and swiftly made their escape, hugging the shore, and hauling their ships across the isthmus that joins Leukas to the mainland (3.79–81.1). Whatever one may think of Alkidas' previous conduct, here he certainly showed prudence. He was outnumbered by the fresh Athenian fleet alone, and he may even have proved himself wiser than Brasidas in not getting too involved on Kerkyra, when Athenian reinforcements were so near.³⁴

The new Athenian fleet was commanded by Eurymedon, and its arrival encouraged the Kerkyraian democrats to finish off their opponents. During the seven days the Athenian fleet was there, Eurymedon did nothing to prevent appalling atrocities (3.81), but even these did not put an end to the strife. About 500 of the oligarchs managed to escape to Kerkyraian territory on the mainland, and, after using it as a base for raids on the island for some time, returned to seize Mount Istone (probably what is now Pantokrátor, the island's highest point). From there they continued to wage guerrilla warfare for some two years (3.85).

The sending of Eurymedon's fleet to Kerkyra is itself an indication that the Athenians were now prepared to make greater use of their continuing naval strength than in 429 or 428. But even more significant is the sending of twenty ships to Sicily at about this time (3.86.1). The squadron was small, though commanded by two *stratēgoi*, Laches and Charoiades, but its mission marks a real departure from Perikles' strategy,³⁵ and this raises the question of who was responsible. We do not really know enough about Athenian politics to be certain, and the disagreements among modern scholars are sufficient to show that no definite conclusions are possible.³⁶ Even command in a particular campaign does not necessarily prove that its holder approved of it, as the sending of Nikias to Sicily in 415 is enough to show. Here one may be tempted to guess that Kleon was in favour of the new strategy, in the light of the evidence that he criticized Perikles' defensive stance, but there is no evidence to connect him with it.

Thucydides says the sending of the squadron was prompted by an embassy from Leontinoi, which was at war with its neighbour, Syracuse, some 20 miles (32 kilometres) to the southeast. The other Dorian cities of Sicily, except for Kamarina (now San Croce Camerina), supported Syracuse, and Leontinoi could count only on Naxos (on what is now Capo Schiso, near Giardini) and Katana (Catania). In Italy, Rhegion supported Leontinoi, and Lokroi (Locri) Syracuse (3.86.2). We know that Leontinoi had an alliance with Athens, dating at latest to 433/2 (ML 64=Fornara 125), and it was probably to this that Thucydides refers when he says the Leontinine embassy came 'in accordance with the ancient alliance' (3.86.3).³⁷ But more interesting are the reasons he gives for the Athenian acceptance of the Leontinine plea. He says that the professed reason (*prophasis*) was kinship, but that the Athenians also wanted to stop the export of Sicilian corn

to the Peloponnese, and ‘to make a preliminary attempt to see if affairs in Sicily could be brought under their control’ (3.86.4).

Here we must presumably accept that Thucydides had good reason to believe that cutting off corn supplies to the Peloponnese was one of the reasons for sending the expeditionary force, but he says frustratingly little about this aspect of the war elsewhere, and it is difficult to believe that even if such supplies had been cut off, the result would have been especially serious. Many, if not most, Peloponnesian states were probably self-sufficient in food, and this will certainly have been true of the Spartans. The worst affected by shortages of food were probably the Megarians (cf. Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 729ff.), whose agriculture will have been disrupted by the twice-yearly Athenian invasions (cf. 4.66.1), and whose ports, Pegai and Nisaia, would both have been dangerous to use. Nisaia can never have been safe, with the Athenian base at Boudoron so near, and probably became impossible after the capture of Minoa. Pegai (Káto Alepochóri) would have been difficult to use when there was an Athenian squadron at Naupaktos, and the same would have been true of all ports east of Naupaktos, including Sikyon and Corinth. But the only hints in Thucydides that imports by sea were important to the Peloponnese, apart from this passage, are the Corinthian warning to the allies of Sparta living in the interior that if they did not support those on the coast, both exports and imports would be more difficult (1.120.2), and the statement that Kythera was a port of call for ships from Egypt and Libya (4.53.3).

Thucydides implicitly repeats his view that the twenty ships were sent to Sicily partly to see whether the island could be brought under Athenian control, when reporting the punishment of the three *stratēgoi* who later commanded the Athenian fleet in Sicilian waters (4.65.3). He says it was because they had been bribed to accept peace when they could have brought ‘matters in Sicily under their control’ (4.65.3). If the view is true, it would suggest that the Athenians had certainly by then forgotten Perikles’ warning against seeking to extend the empire in wartime (1.144.1, cf. 2.65.7).

But is it true? It may have been coloured by Thucydides’ view of the later intervention in Sicily, and perhaps the real object in 427, at least at first, was more limited. Both sides will have been aware of the potential help the Sicilian Greeks might afford, and Thucydides says (2.7.2) that the Spartans had asked for both naval and financial help at the beginning of the war. Hitherto, as far as we know, no such help had been forthcoming, but the Leontine embassy may have roused Athenian fears, as later that of Eggesta was to do (6.6.2). If the Syracusans were allowed a free hand, they might conquer Sicily and then throw their weight behind the Peloponnesians. A modest show of force now might at least bolster their enemies sufficiently to keep them occupied, and this was not the first time the Athenians had responded to such an appeal. They had done so in 429 when they sent twenty ships to Crete (2.85.5–6).³⁸

Thucydides himself confesses that he will describe only the most noteworthy actions in the west (3.90.1), and this may perhaps be our excuse for omitting

operations which had little or no bearing on the war as a whole, and the study of which is complicated for once by conflicts between Thucydides and another contemporary source.³⁹ Charoiades was killed early in the campaign, and Laches seems to have pursued no very coherent plan until he was superseded by Pythodoros early in 425.⁴⁰ Many of his operations, which involved repeated attacks on Lokroi, for example (3.99, 103.3, 115.6), may have been undertaken to please his ally, Rhegion, and in general he seems simply to have seized any opportunity to help the Athenians' friends and harm their enemies.⁴¹

Operations elsewhere in 426 were more interesting. In mainland Greece they began with a Peloponnesian invasion of Attica which was abandoned at the Isthmus of Corinth because of earthquakes (3.89.1).⁴² Some have suggested that the real reason was political, and have connected the incident with the return of King Pleistoanax from exile at about this time (5.16.3; cf. 2.21.1), and with a peace offer.⁴³ But the only evidence for the latter is a reference in Aristophanes' play *The Acharnians* (lines 651–2), produced early in 425; and even though Pleistoanax was later in favour of peace (cf. 5.16–17.1), he is unlikely to have had enough influence to persuade his fellow-countrymen to make a peace offer so soon after his return from exile.⁴⁴ It is possible that abandoning the invasion was due to a general Peloponnesian war-weariness, already detectable in their reluctance for a second invasion in 428 (3.15.2), but we should not forget that earthquakes can be dangerous, and that the Spartans were particularly sensitive both to their dangers and their religious significance after their experiences in the 460s (cf. 1.101.2 and 128.1).⁴⁵

Instead, the Spartans turned to another possible way of harming the enemy: the establishment of a colony at Herakleia in Trachinia, just west of Thermopylai. The colonists included Spartans and *perioikoi*, and an invitation was issued to other peoples to join, apart from actual or potential enemies (3.92.5). The colony was intended to be a base for attacks on Euboea, just across the straits to the east, and it was also thought that it might prove 'useful for the overland route to Thrace' (3.92.4). As it turned out, it was never any danger to Euboea, and it was weakened by attacks by its neighbours and by the reluctance of other people to join because of the behaviour of its Spartan governors (3.93). But it was used as a staging-post by Brasidas on his march to Thrace in 424 (4.78.1), and by reinforcements sent to him in 422 (5.12.1). Clearly, then, it looks forward to the possibility of sending an expeditionary force overland to Thrace and the raising of the Athenians' allies in that area in revolt, a strategy that was to cause the Athenians great alarm and no little damage (cf. 4.108 and 5.14.2).⁴⁶

The Athenians were, for once, possibly even more imaginative. Thucydides says that in the summer they sent thirty ships round the Peloponnese under Demosthenes and Prokles, and at the same time sixty ships and 2,000 hoplites under Nikias to Melos (3.91.1). With Thera, Melos had been the only Aegean island not allied to Athens (2.9.4), but Thera was paying tribute by 430/29 (cf. *IG* i³ 281, ii 54), while Melos may have been contributing to the Spartan war effort by about 427 (cf. *ML* 67=Fornara 132, side, lines 1–2). Nikias failed to



Map 2 Central Greece

win over the island, and, after ravaging it, sailed to Oropos, where he was met by the full levy of the Athenian army under Hipponikos and Eurymedon. The combined forces then marched to Tanagra in Boiotia, where they defeated an army of Tanagrans and Thebans, after which Nikias took his troops back to his ships, and the rest of the Athenian army returned home. Finally, Nikias raided Lokris before also returning to Athens (3.91).

Thucydides does not connect these operations with those of Demosthenes, but what he says about the latter hints that there may have been a connection. He says, 'at about the same time as the Athenians put into Melos', troops from the thirty ships sent round the Peloponnese won a minor victory at a place called Ellomenos, probably in the mainland territory of Leukas,⁴⁷ and then joined the Akarnanians, Zakynthians, Kephallenians and fifteen ships from Kerkyra in an attack on Leukas itself (3.94.1). But when Demosthenes was asked by the Akarnanians to help build a wall to blockade the city of Leukas, 'he was persuaded by the Messenians' to invade Aitolia (3.94.2–3). Later we learn that his idea was to use his mainland allies, the Messenians and Akarnanians, and the Aitolians, to invade Boiotia. His plan, according to Thucydides (3.95.1), was to march through Ozolian Lokris to Kytinion in Doris (probably near the modern Graviá), then down into Phokis and so into Boiotia.⁴⁸

If this really was Demosthenes' intention, the plan looks forward to a similar but less ambitious one in 424, in which Demosthenes was again involved (4.76–7, 89ff.). But although he may have known that Nikias and the main Athenian army were going to invade Boiotia from the southeast at some point in the summer, it is difficult to believe that there can have been any very detailed attempt to co-ordinate the two operations.⁴⁹

In any case, Demosthenes' own plans went completely awry. To begin with, because of his refusal to do what his Akarnanian allies asked, they declined to join him, and the fifteen ships from Kerkyra also went home. But he still had the Zakynthians, Kephallenians, Messenians and 300 Athenian marines from his own ships, and with these he set out from Oineôn in Ozolian Lokris. Oineon probably lay just east of Naupaktos and not far from the coast.⁵⁰ At first all went well. Having taken three small places on his first three days' march, he paused at the last, Teichion (possibly the modern Varna), and sent his booty to Eupalion (Εψάλιον) in Lokris (3.96.1–2). He had been hoping that the Lokrians would join him, because they were neighbours of the Aitolians and armed in the same way (3.95.2–3), with javelins (cf. 3.97.3). But now he foolishly allowed himself to be persuaded by the Messenians to press on to Aigion (probably the modern Strouza).⁵¹ This place he also took, but it was ominous that its people had withdrawn to occupy hills above the town (3.97.2), where they were joined by other Aitolians, and he now found himself under attack from two sides.

What followed was the classic demonstration of the folly of taking hoplites into terrain that suited light troops, who stood much less chance on flat ground, particularly if they allowed the hoplites to close. Now, just as the Chalkidians had done at Spartolos, the Aitolians withdrew whenever the Athenians advanced, but

returned to the attack when they retired, the Athenians having the worst of it because they literally could not get to grips with the enemy. They were able to hold on as long as their archers had arrows, since they outranged the enemy javelineers, but when the commander of the archers was killed and his men scattered, the Athenian hoplites, exhausted by their repeated charges, turned and fled.

Their guide, the Messenian Chromon, had also been killed, and some now found themselves in trackless ravines, others were shot down as they followed paths, and many took refuge in a wood to which the Aitolians set fire. Many of the allies died and about 120 of the Athenian hoplites. Thucydides, with uncharacteristic pathos, describes these men as ‘the best men from the city of Athens who died in this war’ (3.98.4).⁵² Among the dead was the other *stratēgos*, Prokles, but Demosthenes managed to escape. The survivors made their way to Oineîon, and, after recovering the dead under truce, to Naupaktos. From there the thirty Athenian ships went home, either now or later, but Demosthenes, significantly, remained at Naupaktos, ‘fearing the Athenians’ (3.98.5). He may even have been removed from his command.⁵³

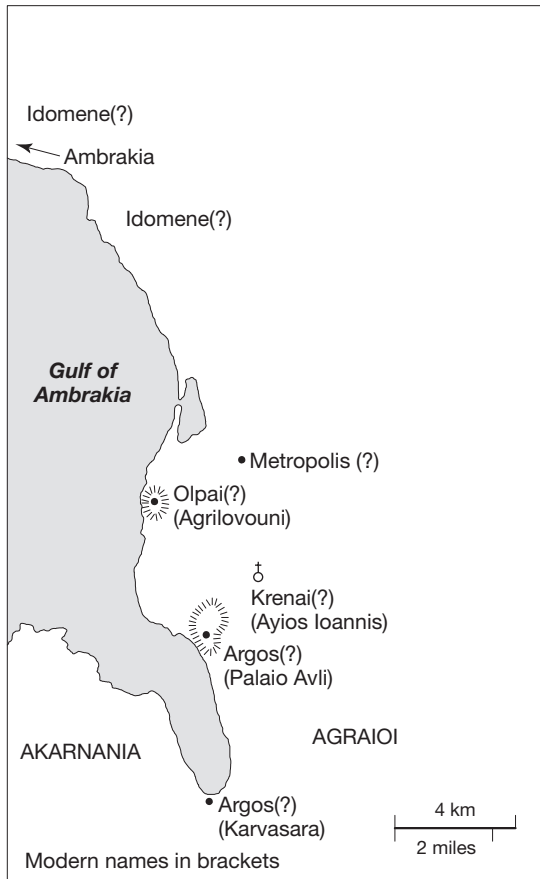
He was, however, soon given the chance to retrieve his reputation, when, in response to an Aitolian appeal, the Spartans sent 3,000 hoplites, including 500 from the newly founded Herakleia Trachinia, to attack Naupaktos. Under Eurylochos, the army assembled at Delphi, and after pressuring the Ozolian Lokrians to abandon their alliance with Athens, advanced on Naupaktos, capturing the nearby towns of Oineôn and Eupalion. Then, after being joined by the Aitolians, it ravaged the territory of Naupaktos, captured the unfortified outer town, and took Molykreion, a Corinthian colony now subject to Athens, which probably lay a little to the northeast of Antirrhiion.⁵⁴

Demosthenes, meanwhile, had learned in advance of the threat to Naupaktos and had appealed to the Akarnanians. Despite their earlier differences with him over Leukas, they had been persuaded to send 1,000 hoplites with him by sea to Naupaktos (3.102.4).⁵⁵ Realizing that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to take Naupaktos, Eurylochos now withdrew westwards to the area around the modern Mesolóngi, then called ‘Aiolis’, and then continued northwards to Proschion (perhaps near Angelókastro) ‘in Aitolia’ (3.102.5).⁵⁶ This move was prompted by an appeal from Ambrakia for help in an attack on Amphiloichian Argos and the rest of Akarnania (3.102.6).

After some delay, the Ambrakiots marched on Amphiloichian Argos with 3,000 hoplites, taking Olpai on the way, while the Akarnanians responded by sending part of their forces to defend Argos and part to a place called Krenai to prevent Eurylochos from joining his allies (3.105.1–2). Unfortunately, none of these places can be certainly located, and the problems are not helped by the modern Greek habit of assigning ancient names, sometimes wrongly, to modern towns. In this case, for example, the modern Amfilochia used to be called Karvasará, and may not be the site of Amphiloichian Argos. The ancient city may have lain further north, on a hill overlooking the Gulf of Ambrakia now called Palió Avlí,

in which case Olpai lay even further north along the coast, probably on the hill now called Agrilovouni, and Krenai may have been northeast of Argos, at the chapel of Ayios Ioánnis.⁵⁷

The Akarnanians also sent for help from Demosthenes and the commanders of twenty Athenian ships sailing round the Peloponnese, while the Ambrakiots asked for all available troops to be sent to join them at Olpai (3.105.3–4). In response, Eurylochos set out from Proschion, crossed the River Acheloös, and managed to slip between Argos and Krenai at night to join the Ambrakiots at Olpai (3.106). The combined force then moved to a place called Metropolis, perhaps just north of Olpai. Soon afterwards Demosthenes, having probably marched overland from Naupaktos, arrived with 200 Messenian hoplites and 60 Athenian archers, and the 20 Athenian ships came to anchor off Olpai. When the Akarnanians and some of the Amphilochians arrived, they chose Demosthenes



Map 3 Amphilochia

as commander-in-chief, and he then led them forward until only a ravine separated them from the enemy (3.107.1–3).

For five days the two armies remained quiet, but on the sixth they began to form for battle. Since the enemy army was larger, Demosthenes was afraid of being outflanked on his right, so he placed a mixed force of about 400 hoplites and light infantry in a sunken road covered by bushes, behind the position he expected to be occupied by the enemy left;⁵⁸ he also placed himself, his Messenians and a few Athenians – presumably the marines from the twenty ships – on the right, with the Akarnanians and Amphilochian javelineers to his left. The enemy left was occupied by Eurylochos and what Thucydides calls ‘those with him’ – perhaps some of the Spartans or *perioikoi* from Herakleia. Next came the Mantineians, and then the Ambrakiots and other Peloponnesians in mixed formation (3.107.3–4).

When the two armies closed, the Peloponnesians on the left outflanked Demosthenes’ right, as he had expected, but the men in ambush fell on their rear, and they fled, carrying away the centre. Meanwhile, the Ambrakiots had driven Demosthenes’ left back and pursued it towards Argos. When they broke off the pursuit and came back, they were set upon by the rest of the Akarnanians, but somehow or other they and the other survivors managed to reach Olpai, though only the Mantineians retained their formation (3.108).

Although relatively unimportant, Olpai is an interesting battle. It shows how traditional hoplite tactics had to be adapted to different situations and different terrains. Demosthenes’ ambush, in particular, anticipates Hannibal’s at the Trebbia,⁵⁹ and also interesting is his use of Amphilochian javelineers apparently to prolong his battle-line, not merely to cover his left flank.

Next day, Eurylochos having been killed, the surviving Spartiate, Menedaios, approached Demosthenes and the Akarnanian commanders for terms by which he could recover the bodies of the dead and withdraw. But although Demosthenes and the other commanders agreed to the usual truce for the recovery of the dead, they were unwilling to allow the whole enemy army to withdraw. Instead they made a secret agreement with Menedaios, the Mantineians, the other Peloponnesian commanders and ‘those who were the most important among them’, to allow them to go. Demosthenes’ objective, Thucydides says (3.109.2), was to isolate the Ambrakiots and ‘the mob of mercenaries’, and to sully the reputations of the Spartans and Peloponnesians in that part of Greece for betraying their local allies to further their own interests. It is not quite clear who exactly were to be allowed to depart. The implication is that some of the Peloponnesians, at least, were also to be left behind, and it is uncertain who the ‘mob of mercenaries’ were, since up to this point Thucydides has said nothing of any mercenaries. Possibly, apart from the Mantineians, the other Peloponnesians were mercenaries and only their officers were to be allowed to go. Although Thucydides does not say so, another motive for the agreement may have been that Demosthenes and the Akarnanian leaders were wary of having to fight desperate men, and if they already knew that the rest of the Ambrakiots from the

city had set out for Olpai, they would not have wanted to be caught between two fires.⁶⁰ As it was, they immediately sent some of their men to cover the various approach routes (3.110).

Meanwhile, the Mantineians and the others covered by the agreement began to leave Olpai in small parties as though to gather wild vegetables and firewood. But it would have seemed odd that officers and other prominent men were carrying out such menial tasks, and when the rest realized that they were escaping, they too began to leave. This provoked the Akarnanians into setting out in pursuit, and when some of their leaders told them that a truce had been made with the Peloponnesians, one of their men threw a javelin, thinking that they had been betrayed. In the end, however, although there was some doubt about who exactly was covered by the truce, the Peloponnesians were allowed to go. About 200 of the Ambrakiots were killed, but the rest escaped to the country of the Agraioi, in the hills east of the gulf, where they were given sanctuary (3.111).

An even worse fate awaited the Ambrakiots approaching from the city. They had reached a place called Idomene, which Thucydides describes as consisting of two hills (3.112.1), and which obviously lay somewhere (precisely where is uncertain) north of Olpai.⁶¹ The men Demosthenes had already sent ahead managed to seize the higher hill unobserved, at nightfall, while the Ambrakiots occupied the lower. Demosthenes himself set out after supper with the rest of his army, and, marching in two divisions by separate routes, fell upon the luckless Ambrakiots at daybreak, while they were still asleep. Thucydides adds the detail that he had deliberately sent his Messenians in advance so that their dialect would not give them away (3.112.1–4).⁶²

The result was a massacre. Many of the Ambrakiots were killed on the spot, and those who tried to escape were hunted down by Demosthenes' Amphiloichian allies, who knew the terrain, and, being armed with javelins, could kill the fugitives without getting too close. Some of the Ambrakiots even swam out to the Athenian ships offshore in their desperation to get away from the 'barbarian' Amphiloichians (3.112.5–8). The extent of the disaster is vividly conveyed by Thucydides' story of how a herald came from the Ambrakiots who had escaped to the Agraioi to ask for the return of the bodies of those killed the previous day at Olpai. He was completely nonplussed to be shown more than 1,000, because he knew nothing of the battle at Idomene (3.113.1–5). Thucydides says that this was the greatest disaster to befall a Greek city 'in the war', meaning probably the first ten years of the war, sometimes known as the Archidamian War, and that he would not give the number of the dead for fear of being disbelieved, given the size of Ambrakia (3.113.6).

He also says (*loc. cit.*) that if the Akarnanians and Amphiloichians had been willing to follow Demosthenes' advice and attack Ambrakia, they would have taken it,⁶³ but that they were afraid that, 'if the Athenians had it, they would be more difficult neighbours'. He goes on to describe how, after the Athenians had gone, the various warring parties in the neighbourhood came to terms. The Akarnanians and Amphiloichians first allowed the Ambrakiots and Peloponnesians

who had taken refuge among the Agraioi, and who had later made their way to Oiniadai, to depart under truce. Then they concluded a peace with the Ambrakiots for 100 years, whereby the latter should not be required to join the Akarnanians against the Athenians, but both should defend each other's territorial integrity. The Ambrakiots also agreed not to support the Anaktorians against the Akarnanians, and apparently kept to this agreement when Anaktorion was betrayed to the latter the next year (4.49).

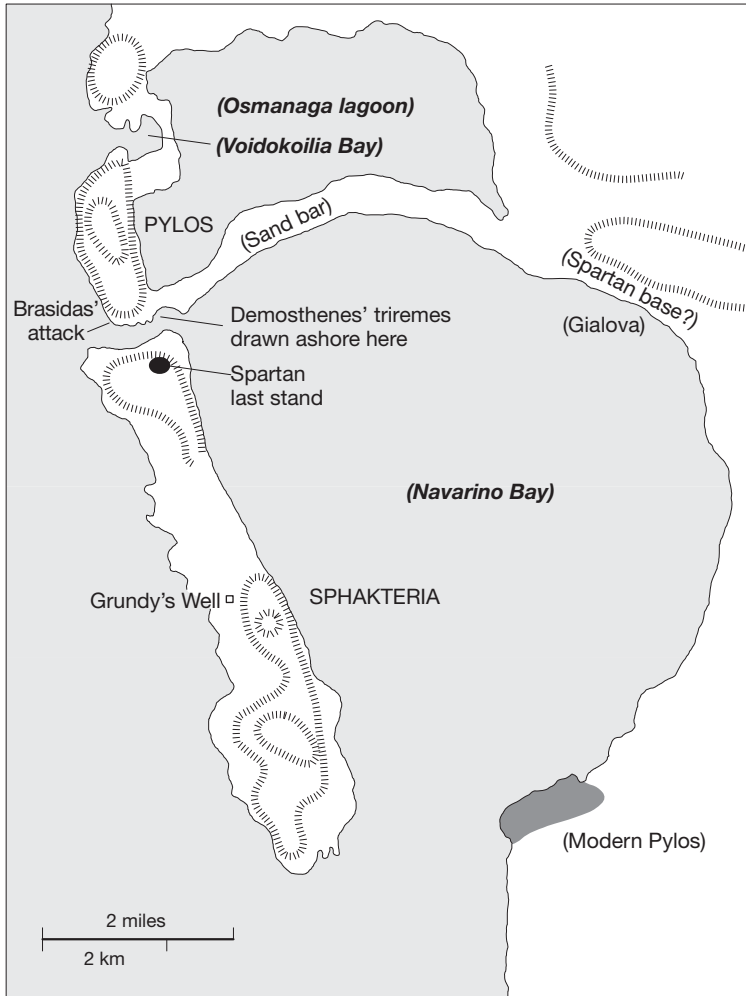
Some time later, 300 Corinthian hoplites managed to get to Ambrakia overland, so there was no longer any chance of its being taken (3.114.2–4), and, in the end, Olpai and Idomene were of little benefit to Athens. If anything, the Peloponnesians were the gainers. But one Athenian who did benefit was Demosthenes. He had been presented with 300 captured panoplies from the spoils, and since he was now no longer afraid to return home, he conveyed these safely to Athens, where they were dedicated to the gods. The spoils given to the Athenians in general, Thucydides says (3.114.1), were captured on their way to Athens – another indication of how impotent sea power could sometimes be. But we happen to know from a fourth-century inscription that a statue of Athena Nike was paid for out of spoils partly from Olpai, so not all can have gone astray.⁶⁴

ATHENS ASCENDANT

Thucydides begins his account of the seventh campaigning season of the war, that of 425, with some minor operations in Sicily and Italy. He then records the fifth Peloponnesian invasion of Attica ‘before the corn was ripe’ (i.e. early in May: 4.2.1), and the despatch of forty Athenian ships to Sicily, under Eurymedon and Sophokles, as decided upon the previous year (cf. 3.115.4–5).¹ The instructions given to the two *stratēgoi* were to call in on Kerkyra on their way, since the pro-Athenians were being harassed by the oligarchs on Mount Istone, and sixty Peloponnesian ships had also sailed to help the latter (4.2.3). So far all was normal, but Thucydides adds that Demosthenes, who was a private citizen at the time, was given leave to make use of the ships, if he so desired, ‘around the Peloponnese’ (4.2.4). It was remarkable, even in Athens, for a private citizen to be given such a command, but Demosthenes was probably already *stratēgos*–elect for 425/4, and, if so, would enter office in the summer.²

When the fleet reached the west coast of Messenia, near Pylos, there was an argument between Demosthenes and its two commanders, Eurymedon and Sophokles. They were all for hurrying on to Kerkyra, where, they had learned, the sixty Peloponnesian ships had already arrived. But Demosthenes wanted them to put into Pylos first, do ‘what was necessary’, and only then go on to Kerkyra. The deadlock was broken only when a chance storm blew up and forced them into Pylos anyway (4.3.1).

What the Athenians called ‘Pylos’ – the Spartans called it Koryphasion – was the headland at the northwest corner of what is now the Bay of Navarino, and Demosthenes demanded that it be fortified, claiming that it was for this that he had sailed with them.³ He pointed out that there was plenty of wood and stone about, the place naturally strong and the surrounding area largely deserted;⁴ Thucydides adds that it was about 400 stades, that is some 44 miles (70 kilometres) from Sparta.⁵ When Eurymedon and Sophokles sneeringly replied that there were plenty of other deserted headlands in the Peloponnese which he could seize if he wanted to waste Athens’ resources, his response was that Pylos had two advantages: it had a harbour, and the Messenians, whose country it used to be and who spoke the same dialect as the Spartans, could use it as a base and would make a reliable garrison (4.3.1–3).⁶



Map 4 Pylos and Sphakteria

The Messenians Demosthenes had in mind were those he had already encountered at Naupaktos, and, to add to his own observations when he had passed Pylos on his way to and from Naupaktos in 426, he had probably been given information by them. Some of them will have been among those expelled from Messenia in about 460, after the helot revolt, others their descendants. But if he had intended to build a fort at Pylos before he left Athens, it is odd that he had not made sure that proper tools were provided (cf. 4.4.2: see below), and this suggests that although he may already have thought of fortifying the place, he had not finally decided. It was perhaps the storm which made up his mind.

Even now, if we are to believe Thucydides (4.4.1),⁷ he still failed to persuade either officers or men to do what he wanted, and it was only boredom that finally got the men to begin the work, though they had no tools for shaping stones, and had to carry clay on their backs because they had no hods. But once they had decided to do the job, they hurried to fortify the most vulnerable places before the Spartans arrived. Luckily, much of Pylos is naturally strong and has no need of fortifications. It is difficult to attack anywhere but at its northern end, where it is fairly easy to scramble up from the sand dunes fringing Voidokilia Bay, from the southwest corner, where anyone landing from the sea can again scramble up over the rocks, and from the southeast, where the eastern cliffs are lower. The Athenians would certainly have walled off the first approach, and there was also a wall at the second (4.9.2). They also clearly walled off the landing place where Demosthenes' ships were later drawn ashore, at the southeast corner.⁸

Thucydides' account of how Pylos came to be fortified has been doubted,⁹ but the psychology is right. It is easy to imagine that men who had been less than enthusiastic about building fortifications when it looked as though they would soon be on their way could have changed their minds out of sheer boredom, and, once started, have pressed on with the work, realizing that if they were going to do the job, it was a race against time. Indeed, Thucydides' story is so vivid that it is hard to believe that he did not get it from men who were there. It also tells us much about the nature of the Athenian armed forces. It is hard to imagine modern soldiers and sailors behaving in this kind of way.

Another difficulty in Thucydides' story is that, having allowed Demosthenes his way, Eurymedon and Sophokles should have decided to leave him with a small force, then continued on their way, but still have hurried back at his request when he found himself about to be attacked. They can hardly have imagined that the Spartans would not react, and if they felt so constrained by their orders to proceed to Kerkyra, why did they respond to the request for help? An obvious answer is that when they left, they and Demosthenes felt that he would be safe from attack by land, but that the situation was changed when the Spartans sent for their ships from Kerkyra.

But, although Thucydides does partly imply this (cf. 4.8.3), how could Demosthenes have known that the Spartan fleet was on its way?¹⁰ Captured or deserting helots might have told him, but it is hard to see how even they could have known; alternatively, the two small Messenian ships which put in an appearance later (4.9.1) might have brought the news. But the solution may be even simpler. The Athenians at Pylos may themselves have spotted the Peloponnesian fleet coming through the channel between the island of Prote (now Próti) and the mainland, just over 10 miles (16 kilometres) to the northwest, and had time to send off two triremes to summon help. If these had headed out to sea and then turned north, the Peloponnesians either might not have seen them or, tired after their voyage from Kerkyra, might have been in no state to intercept.

The timing of all this depends largely on how and how fast we think the various messages were sent and the responses made. Thucydides says that the work on

the fort was completed in six days (4.5.2), and presumably the news of the Athenian landing would have reached Sparta in much less time than that. He says that the Spartans were celebrating a festival, and in any case were in no hurry because they thought they could easily recapture the place, but this need not mean that they did not react at once. All it may mean is that they saw no point in rushing off to Pylos there and then, particularly since most of their army was in Attica (cf. 4.5.1).

In fact, Thucydides' comment on the speed of the army's response (4.6.1) suggests that a message was immediately sent to Attica, and, if so, it could have reached Attica by the time the work on the fort was finished. Similarly, although he only mentions the message to the fleet after the return of the army from Attica and the sending of the first troops to Pylos (4.8.1–2), it may have already been sent. It would have taken longer than the one to Attica, but it could have reached Kyllene in four days or less, and a fast ship, rowing night and day, could then have reached Kerkyra in fewer than thirty hours.

In other words, the Spartan fleet at Kerkyra could also have received its summons within a day or two of the departure of Eurymedon and Sophokles from Pylos, and that this was the case is confirmed by Thucydides' statement that the Peloponnesian ships, having been dragged across the isthmus joining Leukas to the mainland, slipped past the Athenian fleet when it was at Zakynthos (4.8.2). One might have thought that the Athenians would have got beyond Zakynthos before the Peloponnesians had even left Kerkyra, but they may not have been hurrying, despite Thucydides' remark that Eurymedon and Sophokles 'hastened on their voyage to Kerkyra and Sicily' (4.5.2). All he means is that they were eager to be on their way and they may have delayed at Zakynthos, the first friendly place they had reached since leaving the Peiraieus, for a day or two. Thus the Peloponnesian fleet could have reached Pylos at the same time as the Spartan army, as Thucydides says it did (4.8.2).¹¹

As we have seen, Thucydides says the Spartan army quickly left Attica when it heard of the Athenian landing, and there were other reasons why this was the shortest invasion, lasting only fifteen days. The Peloponnesians had arrived when the corn was still green (4.6.1, cf. 4.2.1), so there was a general shortage of food, and the weather was also unseasonably bad. Whether the Spartans marched directly to Pylos or first to Sparta is unclear, but it was probably to Sparta. Thucydides says that there was some delay before the *perioikoi* who had returned from Attica arrived at Pylos (4.8.1), and this implies that they had dispersed to their homes. The Spartans probably also went home, if only to pick up the troops that had not taken part in the invasion of Attica. The first troops to arrive at Pylos were 'the Spartans themselves and the nearest of the *perioikoi*' (4.8.1), which probably means the nearest *perioikoi* to Pylos. The rest of the *perioikoi* did not arrive until later, and although Sparta's Peloponnesian allies were also summoned (4.8.2), they may not have arrived until later still (cf. 4.14.5).

Thucydides says the Spartans planned to attack by both land and sea, and in case the Athenian fleet returned from Zakynthos, to deny it access to the bay by

blocking the entrances at either end of the island of Sphakteria and by occupying the island itself.¹² The difficulty is that, although it would have been feasible to block the northern entrance, Thucydides appears to underestimate the width of the southern channel. As it stands, his text claims that it was only wide enough to let eight or nine ships pass through, presumably side by side, whereas it is really wide enough for at least fifty, allowing for gaps between them. Even if we accept the suggestion that the word for stades (*stadión*) has dropped out of the text and that what Thucydides wrote was that the entrance was ‘eight or nine stades wide’ (c. 1600–1800 yards or c. 1462–1645 metres), the Spartans cannot have intended to block it by mooring triremes close together, prows outward, as he says (4.8.7):¹³ they would have required more than 200, and they had only 60 (4.8.2, 16.3). Even to station enough across the entrance to bar access without a fight would have required at least fifty, and they could not both do this and simultaneously attack Pylos from the sea.¹⁴

Since, as it turned out, they blocked neither entrance, Thucydides may simply have been wrong about their original intentions. However, they certainly carried out one of them, the decision to occupy Sphakteria, and they would hardly have done that if they had never intended to try to stop Athenian entry into the bay. We can also see why they may have had to modify their original plans. If they wanted to attack Pylos from the seaward side, they would have realized that they would have to leave at least one of the entrances open, and that they did not have enough ships both to block the entrances and attack from the sea. In the event, they used 43 ships for the seaward assault (4.11.2), and by the time they gave that up, the Athenian fleet had returned, and it was too late to do anything about blocking the entrances (4.13.1–2). There is also a hint that they realized the risk they were taking in putting troops on Sphakteria without first blocking the entrances to the bay. Thucydides says that detachments were sent over in relays and that they were ‘chosen by lot from all the *lochoi*’ (4.8.9). This was perhaps done by choosing one *enómotia* of 35 men in turn from each of 12 *lochoi*, for the force eventually trapped on the island consisted of 420 hoplites, with their attendant helots, probably one per hoplite.¹⁵

When Demosthenes realized that he was about to be attacked, he sent two of his five triremes to recall Eurymedon and Sophokles, and made his dispositions. First he dragged ashore his remaining three triremes and protected them with a palisade, arming their crews with some poor-quality shields, mostly made of wicker-work, and apparently taken from two small Messenian vessels which had happened to arrive (4.9.1). One is tempted to think that they came by pre-arrangement – why else would they have been carrying spare shields, however poor the quality? – and it is not completely impossible that Demosthenes had said something about occupying Pylos before he left Naupaktos the previous year. The two ships could have lurked in the area for some time.

They also carried forty hoplites. These, along with those from his five ships, meant Demosthenes probably now had ninety in all.¹⁶ He would presumably have had some six hundred sailors, including those from the two Messenian ships,

and he left these, most of his archers and thirty hoplites to guard the landward perimeter. One wonders what sort of arms the sailors would have had apart from their poor-quality shields, but Thucydides implies that the Messenians had also brought some arms (4.9.1), and in any case, rocks and stones picked up on the spot would have been useful against any enemy attacking from below. With the remaining sixty hoplites and a few archers, Demosthenes himself went down to the sea at the southwest corner of the peninsula, beyond the weak wall he had erected there. Although the terrain was difficult and rocky, he expected the enemy to try to force a landing here precisely because the defences were weak.

The Spartans attacked from both the landward and the seaward sides, as Thucydides says they had intended, but he ignores the former assaults, implying, perhaps, that they were not pressed home, and gives us instead a vivid picture of the assault from the sea, commanded by Thrasymelidas. The forty-three Peloponnesian ships had to come in a few at a time, probably because of rocks offshore,¹⁷ and many either failed to reach the shore at all, because their helmsmen were afraid to damage their ships, or were beaten off by Demosthenes and his men. But Brasidas, on this occasion in command of a trireme, forced his own helmsman to run his ship ashore, and was wounded as he tried to fight his way down the gangplank. He collapsed fainting into the outrigger, and his shield slipped from his arm into the sea (4.11.4–12.1).¹⁸

But, despite all their efforts, the Spartans were beaten off both this day and the next (4.13.1). Thucydides remarks on the paradox that they, the experts on land, were attacking their own country from the sea, while the Athenians, the naval experts, were fighting on land (4.12.3). But more important, from a military point of view, was the difficulty Spartan hoplites would have had getting ashore against a resolute enemy with a firm footing. This is also one of the very rare occasions in ancient history when a shoreline was defended.¹⁹

On the third day of the assault the Spartans decided to change their tactics. They sent to Asine (now Koroni) for timber for ‘siege-engines’ (*mēchanai*: 4.13.1), possibly siege-towers or scaling-ladders rather than battering-rams on this occasion,²⁰ intending to attack the Athenian wall on the side near the bay (4.13.1).²¹ In the event, however, they were never able to do so, because now the situation was completely changed by the return of the Athenian fleet. Thucydides says it consisted of forty ships (4.13.2), and despite the doubts of modern commentators, this may be right. The latter argue that with the addition of Demosthenes’ two ships, the unspecified number of ‘guard-ships’ from Naupaktos and the four Chian vessels which are said to have joined the fleet (4.13.2), it should have contained more, but some of the original ships may have been left at Zakynthos for unknown reasons.²²

At first, seeing both the mainland and the island of Sphakteria occupied by enemy hoplites, the Athenians were forced to withdraw to Prote for the night, because there was nowhere nearer for them to moor. But next day they put to sea, cleared for action and determined to fight whether the enemy came out or they had to enter the bay. The enemy, meanwhile, also manned their ships, but

stayed close to shore, probably near what is now called Gialová, at the northeast corner of the bay (4.13.4).

The Athenians, realizing that the enemy was not coming out to fight, swept into the bay through both entrances, routed those ships which were at sea, and pursued them the short distance back to shore, holing many of them and capturing five, one with its crew. Then they attacked those that had fled to shore and rammed some which had been manned, but not yet put to sea; those that were empty they started to tow away. The Spartans on shore, realizing that the men on the island were now in danger of being trapped, rushed fully armed into the sea, grabbing the ships and trying to haul them back. Eventually they managed to save the empty ones, except those captured at the beginning of the fight, but one way or another the Athenian triumph was complete (4.14).

When the news reached Sparta, it seemed best for the authorities to decide what to do on the spot, and when they saw the situation for themselves, they resolved to ask the Athenians for a local armistice, and then send ambassadors to Athens to try to make a permanent agreement (4.15). It may seem surprising that they were so desperate to recover a mere 420 men, but it turns out that these included Spartiates of the highest rank and relatives of those in authority (5.15.1). In any case, the Spartans, with their declining citizen population, could ill afford to lose even a few hundred of their full-citizens.

The Athenian *stratēgoi* agreed to a truce. The Spartans were to hand over the ships that had taken part in the battle and all other warships in their territory, and not to attack the Athenian fort by land or sea. In return, the Athenians were to permit a fixed amount of food and drink to be sent to the men on the island,²³ subject to their inspection, and were to be allowed to keep watch on it, provided that they did not land on it or attack the Spartan army. Any infringement by either side was to mean the end of the truce, which was to last until the return of the Spartan ambassadors. These were to be conveyed to Athens on an Athenian ship. When they returned, the Peloponnesian ships were to be handed back. Once these terms were agreed, the Spartans handed over the ships, about sixty in all, and the ambassadors were sent on their way (4.16).²⁴

The Spartan offer of peace, reported in a somewhat un-Spartan speech by Thucydides (4.17–20),²⁵ was rejected by the Athenians, largely at the urging of Kleon, who here makes his second appearance in Thucydides (4.21.3–22.2). He held out for the surrender of the Spartans on the island, and the return to the Athenians of Nisaia, Pegai, Trozen and Achaia, all of which they had been obliged to give up by the Thirty Years' Peace of 446. When the Spartans asked that the matter be discussed in committee, Kleon vehemently questioned their good faith, declaring that if they had any genuine proposal to make, they could make it in front of everybody. Thereupon the Spartans broke off the negotiations and went home (4.22.3).

Opinion is divided on whether Kleon was right, but on balance he probably was.²⁶ All the Spartans offered in return for their trapped men was peace and an alliance (4.19.1), and a vague forecast that they and the Athenians would share

the hegemony of Greece (4.20.4). But although it is arguable that this would have secured what Perikles had wanted, there was no guarantee, apart from the treaty and alliance themselves, that the Spartans would not reopen hostilities once they had recovered their men. Kleon's terms may seem absurd at first sight, but Trozen and Achaia would have given the Athenians footholds in the northern Peloponnese on both sides of the Isthmus, and Nisaia and Pegai were potentially even more strategically important. With their two ports in Athenian hands, the Megarians were likely to follow, being now probably under a different regime from the one which had led them into war, and already under attack by exiles from Pegai itself (cf. 3.68.3 and 4.66.1).²⁷

When the Spartan ambassadors returned, the truce at Pylos immediately came to an end. The Spartans demanded the return of their ships, but the Athenians refused, alleging infringements of the truce. We have no means of telling whether they were in the right, but Thucydides' language suggests he disapproved, and their behaviour smacks of sharp practice. This casts a different light on Athenian attacks on Spartan duplicity, such as in Euripides' play *Andromache*, which may have been staged at this very time.²⁸

So hostilities at Pylos recommenced. By day two Athenian ships constantly patrolled Sphakteria, sailing round the island in opposite directions, while at night the whole fleet anchored round it, except on the seaward side when there was a wind. Twenty more ships also arrived from Athens, bringing the total to seventy. For their part, the Peloponnesians remained encamped on the mainland, making occasional assaults on the Athenian fortifications and looking for ways to save the men on the island (4.23.2).

But the Athenians did not have things all their own way. There was only one small spring on Pylos, and they mostly had to scabble about in the shingle on the shore to find water to drink. The area they held was also too small for them all to spread out in comfort and for all the ships to moor, so the crews had to eat onshore in relays. Worse still was the psychological effect of being baulked of the quick victory they had expected, for the Spartans paid large sums to anyone prepared to carry food to their men on the island, and even promised freedom to any helots who volunteered. Some of the latter, who owned boats, were prepared to run in from the sea when there was too much wind for the Athenian triremes to keep watch to seaward, apparently being promised compensation for any boats that were damaged. Others swam in with food in goatskin bags, though the Athenians were later able to guard against this (4.26).²⁹ When the news reached Athens, there was some alarm, particularly in case bad weather put an end to the blockade by preventing supplies from being carried round the Peloponnese and compelling their ships to leave such a harbourless area. In any case, they feared that the men on the island would either continue to hold out or would escape in stormy weather, in the boats bringing them food (4.27.1).

This led to one of the most famous scenes in Thucydides, which begins with Kleon impugning the veracity of the reports from Pylos, and ends with his being forced by a jeering assembly to take command of reinforcements being sent to

Demosthenes (4.27–8). Because, too, Thucydides repeatedly pretends to a knowledge of Kleon's thoughts which he could not really have had (cf. 4.27.3–4 and 4.28.2), the scene has been used to call his objectiveness into question, though, given the public facts he certainly could have known, his interpretation of Kleon's thoughts is plausible enough.³⁰

But for all that, he may have been wrong. Whatever one may think of Kleon, he was surely no fool. He of all people should have understood the Athenian assembly, if he was, as Thucydides twice says (3.36.6 and 4.21.3), the man with the most influence over it. Moreover, to the consternation, no doubt, of the 'sensible men' who, Thucydides says (4.28.5), hoped either to get rid of him or, if things turned out unexpectedly, to capture the trapped Spartans, he actually did fulfil his apparently mad boast that he would finish the job in twenty days (4.28.4; cf. 39.3). Would such a man really have allowed himself to be backed into a corner in the way Thucydides describes? Is it not possible that he deliberately engineered the whole incident, seeing an opportunity to gain credit without having to do much himself, since Demosthenes could be relied upon to handle the military side of things? Far from wanting to back out when the mob started to shout at him to accept Nikias' offer to hand over his command, was he not really just waiting for the right moment to accept it, when there was no possibility of its being withdrawn? How else could he have secured it?

This also raises the question how far he had been hand in glove with Demosthenes all along. Thucydides says that he knew of Demosthenes' intention to land on the island (4.29.2), and that he sent word ahead that he was bringing the troops for which Demosthenes had asked (4.30.4). But the troops were already in Athens when he made his boastful promise in the assembly (4.27.4), and this suggests that Demosthenes had already asked for them: it can hardly be a coincidence that the troops he wanted happened to be in Athens. However, if Thucydides' language is anything to go by, Nikias had been appointed to the command (4.28.3), so Kleon may have had to resort to his game with the assembly to secure it for himself. It is even possible that he had been behind Demosthenes' highly unusual appointment, though at that time with no intention of taking a hand himself. It was the trapping of the Spartans on the island that gave him the idea that here was not just a victory to be won, but a coup which would immensely enhance the prestige of those responsible.

Whatever lay behind all this, the upshot was that Kleon was appointed to command the force to be sent to Pylos, consisting of the men mentioned in the debate: Lemnians, Imbrians, peltasts from Ainos and 400 archers from elsewhere (4.28.4). Of these, the Lemnians and Imbrians would have been of Athenian descent and possibly included some hoplites, though the majority were probably light troops; the peltasts from Ainos and the archers will have been mercenaries.

When Kleon and his men reached Pylos, the first thing he and Demosthenes did was approach the Spartans on the mainland, suggesting that the troops on the island be ordered to surrender, and undertaking to keep them in honourable custody until a more general agreement could be reached (4.30.4). The two

Athenians probably did not expect this offer to be accepted, but it was worth a try: if it was, they would not have to face cornered Spartans. The offer may also have been made to deceive the enemy into thinking that the Athenians still did not intend to assault the island. This explains why Demosthenes still waited two days, although he is said to have been eager to attack ever since an accidental fire had burned off the dense undergrowth on the island, which to this day makes movement on it difficult. This had given the Athenians a fair idea of the numbers of Spartans on the island, and probably of their dispositions, though Thucydides does not say so. Until the fire, Demosthenes had feared that the undergrowth might enable the Spartans to ambush his men piecemeal (4.29.3–4), a fear fuelled by his experiences in Aitolia (4.30.1).

The offer was rejected, and during the night following the second day's delay the Athenians attacked. They used about 800 hoplites in the first wave (4.31.1), presumably made up of marines from the fleet, at least some of the Messenians from Demosthenes' original force, and, possibly, some of the Lemnians and Imbrians. There were now more than 70 ships in all (4.32.2), which would have provided more than 700 hoplites, and Demosthenes had originally had 40 Messenians. But some of these and some of the marines from his original five ships will probably have been killed in the earlier fighting, and some will probably have been left to guard Pylos (cf. 4.32.2).

The hoplites chosen for the attack were landed before dawn on both sides of the southern end of the island, and swiftly overran the Spartan picket there, which consisted of about thirty men, perhaps one *enômotia* (4.32.1; cf. 31.2). The Spartans had evidently spotted some movement by Athenian ships, but had assumed they were just going to their usual nightly anchorages, so the landing took them by surprise. Some were still in bed, others donning their armour. That even Spartans on guard-duty could literally be caught napping should be a warning to those who too readily assume that classical Greek troops behaved like their more highly trained, modern counterparts.

At dawn, the rest of the Athenian force was landed. It consisted, first, of the crews of the triremes, except for the *thalamioi*, the oarsmen who manned the lowest bank of oars (4.32.2). The sailors chosen for the assault would have amounted to over 8,000 men, but few will have had proper weapons, worn any protective clothing or carried shields. Those without weapons, however, could have thrown stones (cf. 4.32.4). Second, there were 800 archers and about the same number of peltasts (*loc. cit.*). Four hundred of the archers will have been the mercenaries brought by Kleon (cf. 4.28.4), the rest Athenians from the ships, which could have provided more than 280, and perhaps some of the Imbrians and Lemnians. The 800 peltasts were, presumably, mainly the men from Ainos brought by Kleon, with again perhaps some Imbrians and Lemnians. Finally, there were what Thucydides calls 'the Messenians who had come to help' and those who had been holding Pylos, except those left to man the fortifications (4.32.2). How many there were in this last category is uncertain, since we do not know whether any of what Thucydides calls 'the nearby allies' (presumably

Zakynthos, Kephallenia and Naupaktos) had responded to Demosthenes' call for help (4.30.3), nor how many men had been left to guard Pylos. But altogether there can hardly have been fewer than about 10,000 Athenian troops, excluding their hoplites.³¹

To face this onslaught, the Spartans had originally had 420 hoplites with their attendant helots (4.8.9). There may now also have been additional helots who had wrecked their boats bringing in supplies, and some of those who had swum across may not have been able to get back. But the military value of such men was probably not very great. They are not specifically mentioned in Thucydides' account of the subsequent fighting, though he may allude to them when he says the two sides 'continued to skirmish at a distance for some little time' (4.34.1). Strictly speaking, Spartan hoplites were not equipped to do this, but helots might have been. They were probably armed (cf. Hdt. 9.29.1), perhaps with javelins and daggers, and some appear to have died fighting alongside their masters at other times (cf. Hdt. 8.25.1 and 9.85.2).

As for the Spartan dispositions, Thucydides says that their commander, Epitadas, kept most of his hoplites and presumably their attendant helots in the middle and flattest part of the island, where there was water from what scholars have christened 'Grundy's well', after the British scholar of that name. As we have seen, there were about thirty hoplites, again, presumably, with their helots, on picket-duty at the southern end of the island, and there were also some (another *enômotia*?) in the old fort at the northern end (4.31.2). Epitadas' main body thus probably consisted of only about 350 hoplites and perhaps a slightly larger number of helots.

But Demosthenes did not just rely on his overwhelming numbers. He perhaps realized that if these simply milled around in a huge mass, giving the Spartan hoplites a target to attack in hand-to-hand fighting, the result was by no means a foregone conclusion, as the battle of Plataia had shown. Instead, he divided his second wave into battle-groups of about 200 men and occupied the high ground around the Spartan force, so that wherever they charged, they would find men on flanks, front or rear (4.32.3–4). The 800 Athenian hoplites were clearly kept together, and it should not be forgotten that these alone outnumbered the main body of Spartans by more than two to one. Although Thucydides' account does not really bring this out, they were clearly the focus of Spartan attention (cf. 4.33.1), and would have inhibited the latter from using their usual tactics against missile-armed troops. These were to order the front ranks to charge, but here this risked their hoplites in broken formation colliding with Athenians formed in phalanx.

It says much for the confidence of Spartan hoplites that they were prepared to take on more than twice their number, and for the lack of confidence in their foes that they had come ashore 'obsessed with the notion that they were up against Lakedaimonians' (4.34.1), but the Athenian masses were too well handled, and the odds too great. As Thucydides says (4.33.2), the Spartans 'were unable to close with the [Athenian] hoplites or to use their experience', since the

Athenians would not advance to meet them. Instead, they found themselves assailed on every side by light, missile-armed troops, who ran away whenever they advanced, but then turned to fight when the more heavily armed Spartans ground to a halt. As time went on and the Spartans tired, they were unable to charge with the same vigour, and as their opponents began to realize this, their confidence grew. They began to press home their attacks from all sides, and amid the shouting and the dust, particularly from the burned thickets, the Spartans in turn began to lose heart.³² As Thucydides notes (4.34.2), they were unused to this kind of battle. But their discipline held, and, finally, they were able to close ranks and make for the fort at the northern end of the island. As they retreated, they were pressed even harder, and some were caught and killed, but eventually the survivors fought their way through to join the men guarding the fort.

The new position was a good one. At first the Athenians could come at it only from the front, and the Spartans held out for most of the rest of the day (4.35.3–4). But just as it seemed that there would be no end to the fighting, the commander of the Messenians, called Komon by Pausanias (4.26.2), came to Kleon and Demosthenes and told them that they were wasting their time. If, however, they were to give him some of the archers and light troops, he would find a way to take the Spartans from the rear (4.36.1). With these men he was then able to work his way along the eastern cliffs of the island, unseen by the Spartans, until, to their dismay, he appeared above their heads. Under fire now from both sides, the Spartans began to waver and the Athenians to win control of the approaches (4.36.2–3).

At this point, the Athenian commanders, realizing that the enemy might now all be killed and wanting to take prisoners, stopped the fighting and offered quarter, hoping that this would finally break even Spartan spirits. Most of the Spartans then lowered their shields and waved their arms to signify that they agreed. A parley took place between Kleon and Demosthenes and the now ranking Spartan, Styphon (Epitadas having been killed, and his second-in-command, Hippagretas, buried under a heap of bodies, apparently dead). The Spartans asked if they might communicate with the mainland, but this the Athenians refused. Instead, they themselves asked for heralds to be sent over from the mainland. After discussion with a succession of these, the last said that the decision was up to those on the spot, whereupon they surrendered (4.37–38.3). There were only 292 of them left, of whom about 120 were full Spartan citizens.³³ Of Athenian losses, Thucydides merely remarks that there were ‘not many’, because the battle had not been a ‘stand-up fight’ (*ou stadaia*: 4.38.5).³⁴

Thucydides says that this was the most unexpected thing that had happened in the war, because the Greeks believed that nothing could induce Spartans to surrender (4.40.1). Earlier (4.36.3) he draws a comparison with Thermopylai, and it is clear that the shock felt at the Spartan surrender owed much to the myth that had grown up around that battle. But before leaping to the conclusion that these Spartan soldiers were no match for their ancestors, we should remember that the situations were quite different. At Thermopylai the Spartans were

fighting a non-Greek enemy, and at best could hope only for slavery if they surrendered. On Sphakteria they were fighting Greeks and could expect to go home one day.

It is possible that they were growing more pragmatic. In 421 they were to regard an Argive suggestion that differences should be settled by a 'battle of the champions', as in 546, as 'folly' (5.41.2–3). But there was nothing wrong with their courage. As one of the prisoners wryly remarked when one of Athens' allies tauntingly asked if the good men had all died, 'it would be a valuable spindle [i.e. arrow] that could pick out the good men' (4.40.2).³⁵ A vivid reminder of the battle survives in the form of the bronze facing of a shield, now in the Agora Museum at Athens, with the dedication pricked out on it: 'The Athenians from the Lakedaimonians from Pylos'.³⁶

The most important result of the victory, in the long run, was that it effectively put a stop to further Peloponnesian invasions of Attica, since the Athenians threatened to kill the prisoners if they were again invaded (4.41.1). But there were also significant short-term results. Pylos itself was garrisoned by Messenians, and these began to raid Spartan territory. Faced with something so unaccustomed, coupled with the increasing number of helot desertions, threatening as it did another rebellion such as had occurred in the 460s, the Spartans sent repeated embassies to Athens to try to secure peace. But Athenian tails were up, and all such feelers were rejected. Instead they embarked upon an ever more ambitious strategy.

The first example of this was the landing of a sizeable Athenian army under Nikias and two other *stratēgoi* in Corinthian territory, which had hitherto been spared the ravages of war.³⁷ In all there were 80 ships carrying 2,000 Athenian hoplites and 200 cavalry in horse-transport, as well as hoplites from Miletos, Andros and Karystos. The landing was made south of the Isthmus, on a beach overlooked by the hill of Solygeia 'between Chersonesos and Rheitos' (4.42.2), probably between what is now called Loutrón Elénis ('Helen's Bath') and a point a little further south. What the purpose was is unclear. The hill of Solygeia is, as Thucydides says (*loc. cit.*), 12 stades (about a mile and a half, or just over 2 kilometres) from the sea, too far for the Athenians to have made a permanent base of it. Perhaps the object was mainly psychological – to show the Corinthians, as the Spartans had now been shown, that they, too, were not immune from Athens' power.

The Corinthians were forewarned from Argos – another example of the lack of security prevalent in ancient warfare – and immediately rallied to the Isthmus, except those living 'outside' it (4.42.3: i.e. to the north), whose job, presumably, was to guard against invasion from the Megarid. This is confirmed by the Corinthian decision to leave half their forces at Kenchreai, their port on the Saronic Gulf, in case the Athenians should land at Krommyon, near the modern village of Ayioi Theódoroi, on the Megarian border (4.42.4). The Athenian landing, which was made at night, still achieved surprise, but when the Corinthians

learned of it through signals, they were able to react quickly. Leaving half their army at Kenchreai, the rest marched to Solygeia, where one of the two generals, Battos, took a *lochos* to the village of Solygeia itself, while the other, Lykophron, engaged the enemy (4.42.4–43.1).

What followed was an interesting, though minor, battle, which would be even more interesting if Thucydides had not been so tantalizingly vague at a crucial point. The Corinthians first attacked the Athenian right soon after it had landed, then the rest of their army,³⁸ but the Athenians on the right, with the Karystians on the wing, managed, with some difficulty, to push back the Corinthians. The Corinthians, however, retired up the slope to a loose stone wall, from where they showered the advancing enemy with stones, and then counter-attacked. Again the fighting became hand-to-hand, until the Corinthians were reinforced by another *lochos*, and managed to rout the Athenians and drive them back to their ships, where they rallied. Although Thucydides does not say so, the *lochos* which tipped the balance here may have been the one commanded by Battos, originally sent to the village of Solygeia. Meanwhile, elsewhere, the fighting was equally hard, especially on the Athenian left.

In the end, Thucydides says it was the Athenian cavalry which swung the balance in their favour, the enemy not having any, but he irritatingly does not say how or why. Athenian cavalymen were armed with javelins (cf. Xen., *Hipparch.* 1.21 and 25), and so would not have been used as shock troops against unbroken hoplites, though they might have skirmished with them at a distance (*ibid.*, 8.23–5), and could pursue a routed foe or cover retreating comrades. It was customary to station cavalry on both flanks of a hoplite phalanx (cf., e.g., 4.94.1), and this may have been the case here. But landing cavalry would have been a slower business than landing infantry, and since the Athenian right was evidently landed first and almost immediately attacked (4.43.2), it is possible that no cavalry was landed here at least until the attack was beaten off and the Corinthians pursued up the hill, though it might have covered the Athenian retreat from the hill, and so helped the rally at the ships. On the other hand, Thucydides says that most of the Corinthian casualties, including their general, Lykophron, occurred in the flight of their right wing, while the rest of the army retreated slowly and was not pursued to any great extent (4.43.3–44.1), and this suggests the presence of cavalry on the Athenian left. The exploits of the Athenian cavalry here are possibly commemorated in one of the choruses of Aristophanes' play *The Knights* (595ff.), produced the following year.

When the retreating Corinthians reached the crest of the hill, they grounded arms, and presumably the Athenians broke off the pursuit at this point. They then stripped the dead, recovered their own, and set up a trophy. But the other half of the Corinthian army, which had remained at Kenchreai, although it had not been able to see the battle itself because Mount Oneion was in the way, had seen the dust and now came up to help, whereupon the Athenians retreated to their ships (4.44.3–5). The Athenians had clearly won, as the numbers of casualties made clear – 212 Corinthians for fewer than 50 Athenians – but Thucydides says

that after the Athenians had retired to some offshore islands, they had to send a herald to recover the bodies of two of their dead, which had been left behind, and this, perhaps, technically conceded defeat in Greek eyes. The incident vividly shows the importance classical Greeks attached to recovering the dead and giving them proper burial.³⁹

But this was not the end of the campaign. Weighing from the islands, the Athenians made first for Krommyon, where, after ravaging the neighbourhood, they spent the night. Then, next day, they sailed back past the scene of the battle to Epidauros, where they made a brief landing before going on to what was probably the main objective of the whole expedition, Methana. This is a peninsula jutting out into the Saronic Gulf between Epidauros and Trozen, and the Athenians proceeded to construct a wall across the isthmus joining the peninsula to the mainland, with a fort on the peninsula itself. From here they ravaged far and wide over the territory of Trozen, Halieis and Epidauros, before returning home, after leaving an adequate force to guard the new base (4.45).

Though Thucydides mentions it only later, one result of the occupation of Methana was that Trozen entered into some sort of local agreement with Athens (cf. 4.118.4), and in 424/3 Halieis also patched up a separate truce (*IG* i³ 88).⁴⁰ These successes show more clearly than almost anything else how the Athenians could have made better use of their sea power to bring pressure on coastal Peloponnesians since the beginning of the war.

Thucydides passes straight from his account of the occupation of Methana to a horrendous description of the end of the civil war on Kerkyra. After leaving Pylos with the fleet destined for Sicily, Eurymedon and Sophokles put in at Kerkyra and helped the democrats to storm the oligarchs' stronghold on Mount Istone, forcing them to surrender. The terms were that the survivors were to be taken to Athens for trial, but in the meantime they were to be imprisoned on an island, on the understanding that if there was any attempt to escape, the terms would be void. However, the two Athenian commanders, who were going on to Sicily, made it obvious that they were unhappy about others taking the credit for taking the prisoners to Athens, and this encouraged the leaders of the democrats to deceive the prisoners into trying to escape. Caught in the act, they were handed over to the democrats and butchered with appalling brutality (4.46–8). Thus, as Thucydides grimly concludes, the civil war came to an end, 'because of the one party there was nothing left worth considering' (4.48.5).

Thucydides concludes his account of this momentous year by telling us that in the winter of 425/4, the Athenians ordered the people of Chios to demolish their new walls, because they suspected the Chians of plotting a revolt (4.51).⁴¹ Although the Chians were now the last Athenian allies to retain their own warships and they paid no tribute, the incident may be connected with the reassessment of the tribute we know from an inscription (*ML* 69=Fornara 136) happened this year, but which Thucydides does not mention. This is usually associated with Kleon, because there is some reason to believe that the decree's proposer, Thoudippos, was his son-in-law. But there is no proof that Kleon was

involved, and the significance of both the reassessment and of Thucydides' omission of it may have been exaggerated by modern commentators.⁴²

Even without these indications of growing Athenian confidence, the past year had been a triumphant one for them, and one which perhaps brought them closer to success than they were ever to come again. If it is true, as Thucydides says (4.41.4), that the Spartans sent repeated embassies to sue for peace, the Athenians might have been able to secure terms which would, above all, have provided for the safety of Attica from invasion from the Peloponnese. But, as it was, as Thucydides says (*loc. cit.*), 'they held out for more'.

Nor were they necessarily wrong to do so. The successful occupation of Pylos and Methana, and the landing in Corinthian territory, pointed the way forward to how sea power could be used to hurt the enemy, and particularly those on the coast, significantly. As 424 was to show, though the heartland of Spartan territory was too far from the sea for raiding to affect it, the coastline was certainly not immune.

SPARTA RESURGENT

The campaigning season of 424 opened with an attack by Mytilenean exiles on Rhoiteion, in the Hellespont, and on Antandros. They had hired mercenaries from the Peloponnese, which again shows how easy it was to circumvent Athenian sea power. Rhoiteion they simply ransomed, possibly for a sum equivalent to the tribute the place normally paid to Athens – it has even been suggested that the attack was timed to coincide with the collection of tribute.¹ But they decided to hold Antandros, intending to use it as a base for the reconquest of the mainland towns once held by Mytilene and for attacks on Mytilene itself and other fortresses in the area. Their hopes were, however, frustrated when it was recaptured later in the summer (4.75.1). Its proximity to Mount Ida (Kaz Dagi) gave it access to timber, and thus made it an important centre for shipbuilding (4.52).²

The first Athenian operations were on a much larger scale. Sixty ships, 2,000 hoplites, a few cavalry, and troops from Miletos and other places descended on Kythera, again under the command of Nikias and two other *stratēgoi* (4.53.1). As Thucydides says (4.53.2–3), Kythera lies off Cape Malea, close to Spartan territory, and its inhabitants were classed as *perioikoi*. However, because of its importance as a port of call for merchant ships from Egypt and Libya, and because it provided some protection for the coast against pirates, the Spartans not only sent an annual ‘Judge of Kythera’ (*Kytherodikēs*) to govern the island, but also garrisoned it.

The Athenians first took Skandeia (now Kastri) on the east coast of the island, with ten ships and the Milesian hoplites.³ But the main force landed on the coast facing Malea, perhaps at Diakófti, and then marched inland against the chief town of the island (now Palaiókastro). Here they defeated the Kytherians and drove them back into the upper town. But Nikias had already held discussions with some of them, and this made reaching an agreement easier. The terms amounted to unconditional surrender, though the Kytherians were guaranteed their lives. As Thucydides says (4.54.3), the Athenians might well have expelled them from the island, since they were ‘Lakedaimonians’, if the preliminary talks had not taken place. As it was, they placed garrisons in Skandeia and the main town, but allowed the inhabitants to remain, paying a tribute of four talents,

apart from a few who were exiled to other islands (4.57.4). They then demonstrated how useful Kythera was going to be by raiding Asine (probably the one near Gytheion), Helos and most of the coastal areas (4.54.4).⁴

The capture of Kythera and the raids on their own coasts, following so soon after the disaster at Pylos, thoroughly alarmed the Spartans, who, above all, feared another helot revolt. They sent garrisons of hoplites to various places, and, allegedly for the first time in their history, raised a force of cavalry and archers (4.55.2). As Thucydides explains (4.55.1–2), their problem was that they were faced by a new kind of warfare, in which speed and the unexpected were the orders of the day. As a result, and because of what had happened on Sphakteria, their morale suffered (4.55.4). Most of their garrisons made little or no attempt to resist the raiding, and one that did, near Kotyrta (perhaps the modern Demonía) and Aphroditia, although it caused a panic among the scattered Athenian light troops, gave way before Athenian hoplites who arrived on the scene (4.56.1).

A similar thing happened shortly afterwards when the Athenians, having raided Epidauros Limera (near Monemvasía), attacked Thyrea (Astros), up the coast to the north. It was here that the Aiginetans had been settled by the Spartans after being expelled by the Athenians at the beginning of the war. At the time of the Athenian attack they were building a fort on the coast, but they immediately abandoned this and fell back on the upper town, about a mile (1.6 kilometres) from the sea. However, when they asked the Spartans who had been helping with the fort for assistance, the latter refused and retreated inland. The Athenians then captured and burned Thyrea, and Thucydides says the surviving Aiginetans were taken to Athens and executed, though he presumably means just the adult males; the women and children will have been sold as slaves. The Spartan governor, Tantalos, was imprisoned with the Spartans captured on Sphakteria (4.56.2–57).

The supreme confidence of the Athenians at this time was demonstrated when their forces returned home from Sicily. Desultory operations had continued there in 425 (4.24–5), but eventually, Thucydides says (4.25.12), although the Sicilians carried on the war a while longer, it was ‘without the Athenians’, and in 424 there was an armistice between Kamarina and Gela, followed by a conference at Gela at which a general peace was concluded. The Athenian commanders on the spot, who now included Eurymedon and Sophokles, arrived from Kerkyra, had approved the peace, but when they got home, Pythodoros and Sophokles were exiled, and Eurymedon fined, on the grounds that they had been bribed to withdraw ‘when it was possible for them to have brought matters in Sicily under their control’ (4.65.3: see above, p. 58). Possibly it was felt that with now sixty ships they should have achieved more, though Thucydides’ comment is that the Athenians ‘considered that nothing could go wrong for them, and that the possible and the more difficult were equally attainable’ (4.65.4). Something of this mood is captured in the chorus of Aristophanes’ play *The Knights*, produced earlier this year, in which the triremes are said to have met to discuss a proposal to take 100 of them against Carthage (1300ff.).

At first it looked as though the string of Athenian successes might continue with the accession of the Megarians, who had suffered more than any of Sparta's allies from the beginning of the war. Because they had a land frontier with the Athenians, and no powerful army like the Boiotians, the Athenians had been able to ravage their territory twice a year. Now the situation was made worse by the plundering raids of oligarchic exiles based on Pegai. These prompted discussion of the oligarchs' recall and frightened the democratic leaders into approaching the Athenians. The plan was for them to seize the 'long walls' linking the city to the harbour town of Nisaia, to prevent the Peloponnesian garrison of the latter from interfering. Once this was done, it was hoped that the people of Megara would acquiesce in the handing over of the city (4.66).⁵

Accordingly, the Athenian general, Hippokrates, took 600 hoplites to the island of Minoa, captured by Nikias in 426, and, crossing the causeway between it and the mainland, established himself in a pit near the 'long walls', from which the clay for the bricks used to build them had come. Meanwhile, Demosthenes brought some Plataian light troops and Athenian border-guards (*peripoloi*) to the shrine of Enyalios, also near the 'long walls'.⁶ Some pro-Athenian Megarians had for some time been wheeling a rowing-boat down to the sea, pretending that they were going out raiding, and the guards had grown accustomed to letting them back inside the walls before dawn. Now, when the Athenians in ambush saw the gate open, they rushed from cover, while their Megarian friends started to kill the guards. First inside were Demosthenes and the Plataians, and these secured the gates, holding off the first Peloponnesians arriving from Nisaia. The Athenian hoplites then poured in and after a brief resistance the Peloponnesians retired to Nisaia, leaving the 'long walls' in Athenian hands (4.67–68.3). Soon afterwards, 4,000 Athenian hoplites and 600 cavalry also arrived, having marched all night from Eleusis (4.68.5).

So far it had been a brilliantly conceived and executed operation, somewhat reminiscent of Hannibal's capture of Tarentum early in 212 (Polybios 8.26ff.). But the crucial difference was that at Megara the gate kept open let the Athenians only inside the 'long walls', not even into Nisaia, let alone Megara itself, whereas Hannibal's Tarentine allies secured a gate into the city itself. At Megara the plan had been for the gate into the city to be opened on the pretext of letting the Megarian army out to attack the invaders, and the pro-Athenians had smeared themselves with oil so that they could be distinguished from the rest in any fighting (4.68.5). But one of them revealed the plot and their opponents threatened to prevent the opening of the gate by force if necessary (4.68.6). The ineffectiveness of being smeared with oil as a way of being recognized, particularly when clad in a hoplite panoply, has been noted,⁷ but the right arm and the knees would have been bare, and any more conspicuous means of identification would have raised questions. As it was, the man who betrayed the secret may well have been asked why he was dripping with oil. When the gates failed to open, the Athenian commanders realized that something had gone wrong and decided against trying to take the city by assault. Instead they spent the better part of two

days constructing lines from the 'long walls' to the sea on either side of Nisaia. When these were nearly complete, the Peloponnesian garrison of Nisaia surrendered, on condition that the non-Spartans among them should be ransomed, while their Spartan commander and other Spartans were to be handed over to the Athenians. The Athenians then destroyed a section of the 'long walls' and took possession of Nisaia (4.69).

Meanwhile, Brasidas, who was in the northern Peloponnese recruiting an army for a projected march to Thrace, had heard of the capture of the 'long walls', and was determined to try to prevent the fall of Nisaia and of Megara itself. Sending word to the Boiotians to meet him at Tripodiskos, a Megarian village below Mount Geraneia,⁸ he hurried there himself with 3,800 hoplites from Corinth, Phleious, Sikyon, and those he had already collected himself (4.70.1). Arriving at night, he heard that Nisaia had already fallen, but immediately made for Megara with 300 men and demanded admission, declaring that he had every hope of recapturing Nisaia (4.70.2). However, the two parties in Megara were both, for different reasons, unwilling to do this. The democrats feared that he would restore the exiles and expel them, the oligarchs that the democrats would resist by force and that in the confusion the Athenians might break into the city. Both factions expected a battle and thought it safer to await its outcome before showing their hand (4.71).

Brasidas then returned to Tripodiskos, where he was joined by 2,200 Boiotian hoplites and 600 cavalry, bringing his total to 6,000 hoplites (4.72.2), and with these and the cavalry, he returned to Megara. Here he found the Athenian hoplites drawn up near Nisaia, but his cavalry caught their light troops scattered about the plain and drove them back to the shore, only in turn to be met by Athenian cavalry. In the engagement that ensued, the commander of the Boiotian cavalry and a few of his men were killed, but overall there was no decisive result (4.72). Brasidas and his army now moved even closer to the Athenians and formed for battle 'in a suitable position' (4.73.1). Thucydides says they thought the Athenians would fight and that the Megarians would wait to see who won, but that they did not have to make the first move. By simply being there they had shown a willingness to fight, and might achieve their object without having to do so, whereas they would certainly have lost Megara if they had not put in an appearance (4.73.1–3).

One would like to know whether Thucydides was just guessing here, or whether he had information, perhaps even from Brasidas himself.⁹ Certainly, the thinking was shrewd. It has been suggested that the failure of the Peloponnesians to attack a smaller Athenian army betrays an ongoing lack of confidence.¹⁰ But this is to miss the point. If Thucydides was right, they had no intention of avoiding battle if the Athenians wanted to fight, but because they thought they could achieve their objective of gaining entry to Megara if the Athenians refused to fight, they could see no point in provoking a battle. And they were right. After neither side had made a move for some time, the Athenians were the first to withdraw, to Nisaia, and Megara did then open its gates to the Peloponnesians (4.73.4).

In some ways this was the turning-point of the war, or at least of its first phase, and if anyone is to be criticized for lack of confidence, it is the Athenians. Thucydides says (*loc. cit.*) their generals thought that fighting a battle against superior numbers was not worth the risk, since they had mostly been successful so far. If they won, they would gain Megara, but if they lost, the cream of their hoplites might suffer serious losses. But, although it is true that the enemy had a numerical advantage in hoplites, with 6,000 to the Athenians' 4,600, the two sides were equal in cavalry, and the Athenians also had the Plataian light troops and the frontier-guards. In any case, Megara was surely worth the risk, and the excuse that they had 'mostly been successful so far' was very weak. Nisaia was not worth much without Megara.¹¹

It has even been suggested that the Athenian generals' minds were on other things, for there were people in Boiotia who had perhaps already been in touch with Demosthenes and Hippokrates about the possibility of overthrowing the oligarchic regime there and replacing it with an Athenian-style democracy.¹² The leading conspirator was Ptoiodoros, probably from Thespiiai,¹³ and the idea was to undermine Boiotia from all sides. First, Siphai (modern Aliki), the port of Thespiiai, was to be betrayed to Demosthenes, who was to go to Naupaktos with a fleet. At the same time Chaironeia was also to be betrayed by a pro-Athenian party in nearby Orchomenos, while Orchomenian exiles were also active in the plot, even hiring mercenaries in the Peloponnese.¹⁴ Orchomenos was Thebes' chief rival, and might hope to take a leading role in a pro-Athenian Boiotia. Chaironeia was on the border between Boiotia and Phokis, near the Phokian town Thucydides calls 'Phanotis' (usually Panopeus, now Ayios Vlasis), and some Phokians were also involved.¹⁵ Finally, the Athenians were to seize Delion (probably the modern Dilesi),¹⁶ the site of a temple of Apollo, in the territory of Tanagra in southeast Boiotia.

All this was to happen on a fixed day to prevent the Boiotian authorities' concentrating on any single threat, and the conspirators hoped that even if there was no immediate change of regime in Boiotia, the pressure from all sides would soon bring it about (4.76.5). Accordingly, while Hippokrates began preparations to seize Delion, Demosthenes set out first for the northwest. There he found that Oiniadai had at last been brought over to the Athenian side by the Akarnanians, and after raising every available man from allies in the area, he made a brief foray against the Agraioi, perhaps to convey the impression that his presence in the west was no threat to Boiotia (4.77.2).

Apart from secrecy as usual, the success of the plan depended on exact timing, but, somehow, a mistake was made, and when the time came, about the beginning of November, Demosthenes arrived at Siphai before Hippokrates had made his move. The plot had already been betrayed, in any case, by a Phokian from Panopeus, but the mistake in timing meant that the Boiotians were able to make sure of both Siphai and Chaironeia, without being distracted by a threat in the southeast, and elsewhere the conspiracy collapsed (4.89). On his way home, Demosthenes tried to retrieve something by raiding Sikyonian territory,

but made a hash of that, too, by landing piecemeal, and was beaten off with some loss (4.101.3–4).

Meanwhile, however, Hippokrates had gone ahead. With a *levée en masse*, including both resident and non-resident aliens, probably to speed the work, he seized and fortified Delion. Then, when the work was just about done, he sent most of the army off on its return march to Athens, while he busied himself with final arrangements. His hoplites halted after just over a mile (1.6 kilometres), probably to wait for him, while the light troops went on their way (4.90.1–4). This short march had probably taken the hoplites to the frontier area between Boiotia and Attica (cf. 4.91),¹⁷ and they presumably thought they had no reason to fear a confrontation. They had probably had no news from Demosthenes and would have assumed that what was going on in western Boiotia would keep the Boiotians occupied.

But the delay proved fatal. In reality, the Boiotian army was mustering at Tanagra, only some 12 miles (19 kilometres) away. Ten of the eleven boiotarchs, the highest officials of the Boiotian League, argued that there was no point in fighting since the Athenians had already returned to Attica, but the eleventh, Pagondas of Thebes, who held the supreme command at the time, was determined to fight. Thucydides says he addressed his army *lochos* by *lochos* (4.91), which is one of the few occasions when an indication is given of how an ancient general might have spoken to thousands of men, though Thucydides actually says that here Pagondas did not want all his men to leave the ranks at once.¹⁸ Having harangued his men, he led them forward until only a hill separated them from the Athenians. There he halted and formed them for battle (4.93.1). Then, after sending a detachment to cover Delion, he led his men over the crest of the hill. He had about 7,000 hoplites, more than 10,000 light troops, 1,000 cavalry and 500 peltasts, with the Thebans on the right ranged 25 deep, the rest at varying depths, and the cavalry and light troops on either wing (4.93.4).¹⁹

Diodoros claims that in front of the whole array were ‘the so-called “charioteers and sidesmen” [*êniochoi kai parabatai*], picked men 300 in number’ (DS 12.70.1). This is probably a reference to the famous Theban ‘Sacred Band’ (*hieros lochos*), but since there is evidence that it was formed only in the fourth century (Plut., *Pel.* 18), and Diodoros goes on to talk of a preliminary cavalry battle which also does not appear in Thucydides (DS 12.70.2), we should, perhaps, ignore everything he says. But the obsolete terms he uses for the men who formed the unit suggest that it was much older than the fourth century: ‘charioteers’ and ‘sidesmen’ (the warriors who rode beside the charioteers) had gone out with Homer (cf., e.g., *Iliad* 23.132). If the Sacred Band really fought at Delion, it would have fought on foot, and probably formed the front ranks of the Theban contingent, as it probably did at Leuktra. This would have given the already formidably deep Theban phalanx a real cutting edge. The depth of the formation looks forward to the Nemea and also to Leuktra.²⁰

Meanwhile, Hippokrates, who had heard of the approach of the Boiotian army, sent word to his men to prepare for battle, and hurried to join them, leaving

300 cavalry to guard Delion (4.93.2). He had about the same number of hoplites, but he deployed them in the usual eight-deep formation. This would have given the Athenians a longer line, but how much longer is uncertain since we do not know how many Thebans there were, nor the depth of the rest of the Boiotians. In any case, the longer Athenian line was probably of little or no advantage, for Thucydides says that water-courses prevented the ‘extremities’ (*ta eschata*) of both armies from making contact (4.96.2). By the ‘extremities’ he might mean the cavalry and light troops, but after saying that they were on the wings of both armies (4.93.4 and 94.1), he does not mention them again until Pagondas sent two squadrons of cavalry to support his left, at the crucial point in the battle (94.96.5). If he means the ends of the two hoplite phalanxes, the rough terrain would obviously have affected the longer Athenian line more than the Boiotians. However, it would also have nullified the immense numerical superiority of the Boiotian light troops – allegedly 10,500 (4.93.4) to ‘a few’ Athenians (4.94.3).²¹

Hippokrates had begun to harangue his men, walking along his line – again an indication of how such harangues might have been delivered – but had reached only halfway when the Boiotians, after a brief further address from Pagondas, raised the battle hymn, the ‘*paian*’, and advanced down the hill, whereupon the Athenians also advanced and met the enemy at the double (4.96.1).²² There was certainly none of the preliminary skirmishing sometimes alleged to have taken place in hoplite battles here,²³ for Thucydides mentions the ‘shoving of shields’ (*ôthismôi aspidôn*) right at the beginning of his account (4.96.2). In fact, we should probably imagine a literal crash of shields, as the two phalanxes closed, followed by an immediate build-up of pressure as the rear ranks literally ‘shoved’ those in front.²⁴

The whole left of the Boiotian army seems to have given way almost immediately, suggesting that it was no more than eight deep, like the Athenians. Only the Thespians, true to the tradition established immortally at Thermopylai (Hdt. 7.222 and 226) and exemplified again at the Nemea (Xen., *Hell.* 4.2.20), stood and fought it out, losing heavily when those on both sides of them gave way (4.96.3). A mass grave found near Thespiiai in the nineteenth century AD may contain their remains.²⁵ Thucydides also says that some Athenians were confused by the wheeling, probably on both sides of the Thespians, and ended up killing one another. This not only highlights the confusion of such battles, but shows how difficult it was to distinguish one hoplite from another in a *mêlée*, though there is slight evidence that Athenian hoplites sometimes bore an ‘A’ on their shields.²⁶ The stubborn resistance of the Thespians, and the confusion among the Athenians, perhaps prevented the latter from wheeling to their left to exploit their victory, though one wonders whether they would have done this in any case. Six years later, at Mantinea, even trained Argives failed to exploit their victory on the Spartan left.²⁷

Meanwhile, the Athenian left had been holding its own against the massed Thebans on the Boiotian right, and although no phalanx eight deep could hope to withstand one twenty-five deep for long, there was no sudden collapse. Instead,

the Thebans, Thucydides says (4.96.4), 'after shoving the Athenians back gradually at first, pressed them hard' – a passage that surely indicates that the 'shoving' so often mentioned in accounts of hoplite battles was literally that – and it was an unexpected twist that turned this one into a rout. To aid his reeling left, Pagondas sent two squadrons of cavalry from his right behind the hill which had originally concealed his army from the enemy, and their sudden appearance struck consternation into the victorious Athenian right, which thought they heralded the arrival of a new army.²⁸ Some have suggested that Pagondas was following a set plan here, but this is not what Thucydides implies, and is unlikely in itself.²⁹ He could hardly have known that the cavalry's appearance would cause such panic, and the massing of his right shows that he hoped to win the battle in the usual way. The innovation in Epameinondas' tactics at Leuktra was that he massed his left.³⁰

As panic spread on its right and the Thebans started to break through its left, the whole Athenian army turned to flee. Some, presumably from the right, made for Delion and the sea, some for Oropos, others for Parnes. But the Theban cavalry pursued them relentlessly, aided by some Lokrian cavalry which had arrived as the rout began. This is a good example of one of the principal roles classical cavalry could have, but it is odd that the Athenian cavalry did not intervene to protect its retreating infantry comrades, as it did later at Mantinea (5.73.1). Perhaps, after 300 troopers had been left to guard Delion (4.93.2), it was no match for the 1,000-strong Boiotian cavalry, to say nothing of the additional Lokrians. Although the 300 Athenians guarding Delion had been ordered to intervene if they saw a chance (*loc. cit.*), they had been prevented from doing so by a Boiotian covering force (4.93.3). As it was, it was night that helped most of the fugitives to escape, and next day those who had taken refuge in Delion and Oropos were evacuated by sea, leaving a garrison in the former (4.96.5–9). One of those who escaped on foot was Sokrates, whose resolute demeanour deterred pursuers and saved not only himself but his companions (Plato, *Symp.* 221a).

But Athenian losses were severe. Nearly 1,000 hoplites – twice as many as the Boiotians lost – fell, including Hippokrates himself, and considerable numbers of light troops and 'baggage-carriers' (*skeuophoroi*: 4.101.2), probably slaves who attended the hoplites. At over 14 per cent, the losses among the Athenian hoplites were proportionately perhaps the worst ever suffered by a hoplite army in a pitched battle. At first, too, the situation was made worse by the Boiotian refusal to hand back the dead. Their ostensible reason was that the Athenians had violated Greek custom by desecrating the temple of Apollo at Delion (4.97.2–3). However, that this was really just a way of trying to induce the Athenians to abandon the temple without a fight is shown by their herald's demand that the Athenians should leave the temple and then take 'what was theirs' (4.97.4). This was repeated in the Boiotian reply to a later Athenian protest (4.99), and once the temple had been recaptured, the bodies were returned (4.101.1).³¹

The Boiotians had sent for javelineers from Malis and for slingers from elsewhere, and had been joined by 2,000 Corinthian hoplites, the ransomed

Peloponnesian garrison from Nisaia (cf. 4.69.3), and by a force of Megarians (4.100.1), and their assault on the temple at Delion provides another example of the ingenious siege-craft displayed by Athens' enemies in this war. The unusual feature was a primitive form of flame-thrower, lovingly described by Thucydides (4.100.2–5). This was clearly an advance on the bundles of wood used in the attempt to set fire to Plataia, though the combustible materials – sulphur and pitch – were the same (2.77.3 and 4.100.4). At Delion the defenders were unable to maintain their position, and the fortifications were taken. Of the garrison, some were killed and 200 were taken prisoner, but the majority managed to escape by sea (4.100.5).

This was not the last disaster to befall Athens this year. As we saw, when Brasidas intervened at Megara, earlier in the year, he was recruiting mercenaries in the northern Peloponnese for a projected campaign in Thrace. After his success at Megara, he had made his way, via Herakleia, through Thessaly to Macedonia. Of his 1,700 hoplites (4.78.1), 700 were helots, the others the Peloponnesian mercenaries he had been recruiting (4.80.5). This was the first time, as far as we know, that the Spartans were prepared to use helots in this way, and one might have thought that the reason was lack of manpower. But Thucydides says that they were glad to send helots because they feared a helot revolt as a result of the Athenian attacks on their territory.³²

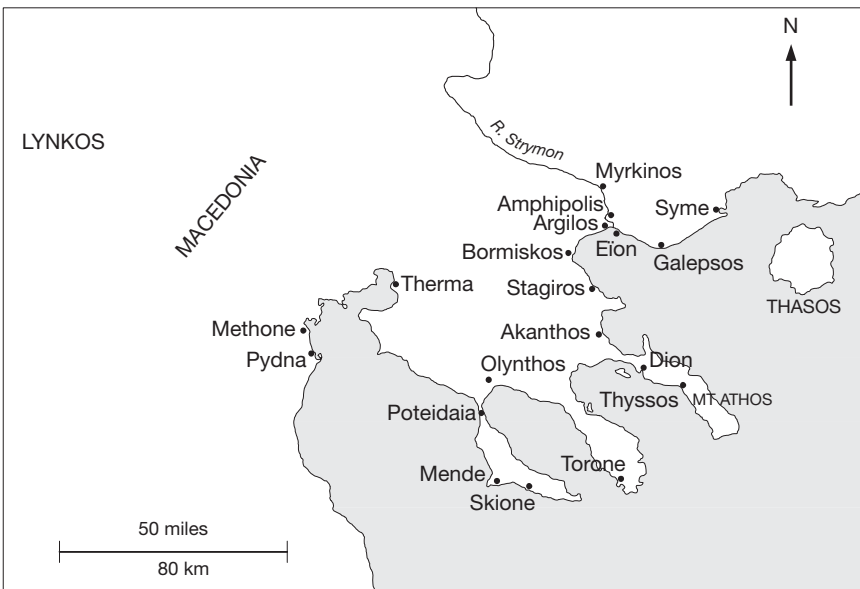
It is sometimes thought that the expedition was Brasidas' own idea and that the Spartans in general had not yet grasped the importance of raising revolt among Athens' allies.³³ But, according to Thucydides (1.81.3), King Archidamos had already mentioned the possibility in 432, though only to dismiss it because of Sparta's lack of naval power, and the Corinthians had also hinted at it (1.122.1). In 426 Herakleia had allegedly been founded because it might prove useful as a staging-post on the way to Thrace (3.92.4).

It is true that Thucydides says that when the Spartans sent Brasidas it was 'mainly at his own wish' (4.81.1), and later that they did not support him because of the jealousy of leading men and because all they wanted was to recover the prisoners taken on Sphakteria and end the war (4.108.7). But he also says that the wishes of Athens' Chalkidian allies, whether already in rebellion or not, and of Perdikkas, king of Macedonia, for an army from the Peloponnese fitted in with Spartan views (4.79.2–3). They hoped thereby to divert Athenian attacks from the Peloponnese, and were glad to get rid of some of the helots (4.80.1–2). Possibly, too, those who wanted to bring the war to an end hoped to have something with which to bargain, if Brasidas was successful (cf. 4.81.2). Thucydides, moreover, has Brasidas himself claim, in his speech to the people of Akanthos, that he had bound the Spartan authorities to respect the autonomy of any states he won over, by the strongest of sworn guarantees (4.86.1), and later Thucydides says this was one of the factors that influenced the Akanthians to defect (4.88.1). In short, though Brasidas may have encountered some opposition from the Spartan authorities, in the end he had won them over to his point of view, and was thus following an official line.

When he reached Macedonia, he first became embroiled in the war Perdikkas was waging against his neighbour, Arrhabaios, king of the Lynkestian Macedonians, west of Lake Prespa.³⁴ But when, with Perdikkas, he reached the pass leading into Lynkos, he insisted on negotiating with Arrhabaios, much to Perdikkas' fury, and withdrew his army. Thucydides says that Arrhabaios had already been in touch with him, that the Chalkidians with him advised him not to remove all Perdikkas' worries in order to keep him on their side, and that, in view of the undertakings by Perdikkas' envoys at Sparta to bring places over to their side, he was entitled to take a wider view (4.83.2–6).

He was no doubt anxious, in any case, to get on with the main purpose of his mission, for he now marched on Akanthos (modern Ierissos). Here the people were by no means unanimous, but were persuaded by fears for the grape harvest to allow Brasidas himself to address their assembly. After a speech which was a mixture of veiled threats and promises, if Thucydides reproduces it at all accurately,³⁵ they were persuaded to allow him and his army inside their walls. They insisted, however, that he himself take the same oaths to respect their autonomy as he claimed the Spartan authorities had when they sent him (4.88.1). Shortly afterwards, Stagiros (probably the modern Vini) also joined in the revolt (4.88.2).

But it was after the battle of Delion, late in 424, that Brasidas pulled off his greatest coup – the capture of Amphipolis. This was an Athenian colony on the River Strymon, and, as Thucydides explains (4.108.1), important both for timber



Map 5 Thrace and Macedonia

for shipbuilding and for revenue.³⁶ It was also strategically important in that it controlled the best crossing-place of the river. Above it the area was marshy; below it, since the river was navigable, any crossing could be threatened by Athenian warships based at Eïon at the river's mouth.

Brasidas' approach to Amphipolis was characteristically bold and swift. Starting from Arnai in Chalkidike (the modern Arnaia?), by evening he had reached 'the Aulon', the pass of Rendina, and Bormiskos (near the modern Stavros), where Lake Bolbe (Volvi) runs into the Gulf of Strymon. Here he fed his men, and then pushed on through the night to Argilos (possibly Paliókastró, about 2 miles – 3.2 kilometres – west of the Strymon), despite bad weather, including snow. Here he was given an enthusiastic welcome, and guides took him on that same night to the bridge across the Strymon at Amphipolis (4.103.1–4).³⁷ According to Thucydides (4.103.4), the Athenians had long suspected the people of Argilos of plotting against Amphipolis, and some who lived there were active in the anti-Athenian faction.³⁸

Finding the bridge across the Strymon lightly guarded, Brasidas forced his way across and overran the area around the city, taking a number of its people prisoner (4.103.5); at this time its walls did not come down to the river.³⁹ His arrival was totally unexpected, and Thucydides says it was thought he might have taken the city there and then if he had immediately moved up to the walls and not allowed his men to plunder (4.104.2). As it was, he was forced to camp outside, since most of the city's inhabitants were against him and prevented the gates from being opened. They also co-operated with Eukles, the Athenian in charge of the city's defence, in sending for help from the other Athenian general in the area, none other than Thucydides himself. As he tells us (4.104.4–5), he was based on the island of Thasos, and immediately set off with the seven ships he happened to have with him, intending to save Amphipolis if he could, but, if not, at least to save Eïon.

Brasidas was aware not only of Thucydides' approach, but of the influence he had among local leading men through his right to work the gold mines in the area. He was thus particularly anxious to win over Amphipolis before Thucydides arrived, lest his arrival, promising as it would not only naval but local help, confirmed the Amphipolitans in their allegiance. He therefore offered moderate terms, guaranteeing anyone who wished to remain, whether Amphipolitan or Athenian, their property and equal political rights, and anyone who wished to leave the opportunity to do so, with their property (presumably moveable), within five days (4.105).

This caused a swing of opinion among the majority, most of whom were not Athenians, and many of whom had relatives among the prisoners Brasidas had taken, and encouraged the anti-Athenians to advocate acceptance of the terms. The result was that the city went over to Brasidas on the very day that Thucydides reached Eïon, in the evening. He claims that Eïon, too, would have fallen that night, if he had not arrived when he did (4.106). As it was, he was able to organize its defence in time, thus providing an asylum for the refugees from Amphipolis,

and to beat off an attack by Brasidas (4.107.1–2). Obviously there is an element of self-justification here, but in fact Eukles' message would have taken some five or six hours to reach Thasos, and Thucydides not much less time to get from Thasos to Eion. Assuming that Eukles did not send his message until dawn, and allowing time for Thucydides to ready his ships, he can certainly be seen to have moved as fast as he could. But this did not save him from the wrath of his fellow-countrymen. As he tells us, characteristically in a later passage (5.26.5), he was exiled 'after his command at Amphipolis'.

Meanwhile, Brasidas went from strength to strength. Myrkinos, some 7 miles (11 kilometres) up the Strymon, immediately came over to him, and so soon did Galepsos, on the coast east of Eion, and a place our text of Thucydides calls 'Oisyme', but which may really have been 'Syme'. Since it, like Galepsos, was a colony of Thasos, it presumably lay somewhere east of Galepsos (4.107.3). Thucydides says that Brasidas' moderation and talk of freedom proved attractive to Athens' allies in the area, who clamoured for his help. But while the Athenians were active in sending troops to various places, considering the short time available and the bad weather, he received nothing from home, despite his pleas (4.108.2–7). Nevertheless, he was able to win over all the towns of what was then called 'Akte' (now Mount Athos or the Holy Mountain), except for Sane on the isthmus joining it to the mainland, and Dion to the southeast, near modern Ouranópolis (4.109.2–5).

After ravaging these last two places, early in 423 Brasidas turned his attention to the promontory of Sithonia, marching against Torone, which lay near its southwest corner.⁴⁰ Arriving, typically, while it was still dark, just before dawn, he took up a position at a shrine to the Dioskouroi, about a quarter of a mile (400 metres) outside the walls, where he was joined by some of the group within the town who had been in touch with him. He then detailed twenty lightly armed men to enter the city, but only seven had the courage to go through with it. These somehow made their way through the wall facing the sea, perhaps where part of it had collapsed (cf. 4.112.2). After surprising the guards in the post on the top of the hill on which the city stood, they began to break down the postern gate facing the promontory of Pellene to the west (4.110).

Meanwhile, Brasidas moved forward a short distance and then waited again, sending 100 peltasts to rush the gate the moment it was opened and the agreed signal given. There was some delay while sympathizers in the city and the seven men who had already entered broke down the postern and cut through the bar of the main gate leading to the agora. But all the time the peltasts crept nearer, and when some had been let in by the postern gate to take any defenders of the main gate in the rear, the signal was made by lighting a fire, and the rest entered by the main gate (4.111).

As soon as Brasidas saw the signal, he led the rest of his men forward at the double. Shouting as they came to cause maximum confusion, they burst in by both gates, or climbed over the wall where it was under repair, using baulks of timber used for hauling up stones. Brasidas himself led the main body straight to

the highest point in the city, while the rest of his men scattered (4.112). There was some resistance from fifty Athenian hoplites sleeping in the agora, some of whom were killed. But the rest soon fled to the fort at Lekythos, on a promontory jutting out from the city, some on foot, some on the two triremes stationed at Torone. Here they were joined by their local sympathizers (4.113).

By now it was day, and, with the city firmly in his hands, Brasidas offered those who had taken refuge with the Athenians the chance to return home and exercise their rights as citizens without reprisals, and the Athenians the chance to leave under truce. This they refused, but they asked for a truce to recover the dead, and Brasidas extended it to two days, which both sides spent strengthening their positions (4.114.1–2). Brasidas also held a meeting of the citizens of Torone, at which he made much the same speech as he had at Akanthos (4.114.3–5). Then, when the truce expired, he attacked Lekythos. Despite its weak defences, the Athenians held out for one day, but on the next Brasidas brought up yet another device for setting fire to the wooden parts of the fortifications.

At the point where these were most approachable, the Athenians had erected a wooden tower on top of a house, filled with men, jars and tubs of water and stones. The weight brought it down with a loud crash, and although this caused more annoyance than alarm among those near by, who saw what was happening, those further away, thinking that the fort had been stormed, fled to the triremes moored at the shore. Brasidas, seeing what was happening, ordered a general assault, killing those he caught, though the rest escaped in small boats or on the triremes, leaving the fort in his hands (4.115–16).

The whole operation was a credit to Brasidas' ability to plan well ahead, move swiftly and under cover of darkness, and think quickly on his feet, taking advantage of every opportunity that was offered. But it is also the most interesting of his successes in Chalkidike for the light it sheds on relations between the Athenians and their allies. Throughout his account of the defections to the Spartans, Thucydides seems to imply that only a minority was in favour, and that the majority were either ignorant of what was going on or were opposed. This has been used to show that there was widespread goodwill towards the Athenians among ordinary people, and that only a few were pro-Spartan.⁴¹ But what Thucydides says about Torone shows that one should be careful of taking words like 'few' and 'many' at their face values. It is true that he describes those who were ready to hand over Torone as 'few' (*oligoi*: 4.110.1), and says that the majority (*to . . . polu*: 4.113.2), knowing nothing, were in total confusion. But when he says that those 'sympathetic' (*epitêdeioi*: 4.113.3) to the Athenians fled with the Athenian hoplites to Lekythos, he indicates that they, too, were few in number, and this is confirmed when Brasidas holds the assembly. In short, it is clear that there were a few people actively opposed to the Athenians, and a few people openly sympathetic to them, but that the majority were neither. Most people just wanted a quiet life, and probably accepted Athenian rule, not because they particularly liked it, but because the alternative was fraught with risk, until something like the advent of Brasidas changed the situation.

In March 423, somewhat surprisingly, after Brasidas had spent the rest of the winter organizing his conquests and planning future strategy, an armistice was concluded for one year (4.117.1). The Athenians, according to Thucydides, thought that this would give them breathing-space to secure their allies, and that if they were then in a good position, they could come to a more general agreement. His analysis of Spartan thinking is more difficult to understand. He says that, although they realized what the Athenians intended, they thought that once they had a respite, they would be more willing to restore the prisoners from Sphakteria and conclude a more lasting peace, while they themselves were anxious to recover the prisoners while Brasidas was still successful. But then he seems to say that if he was even more successful and put them on equal terms with the Athenians, they would give up the chance of recovering the prisoners and continue the struggle in the hope of outright victory (4.117.2).⁴²

The main purpose of the armistice was clearly to bring about a lasting peace, as Thucydides says (4.117.1), and as is confirmed by the Athenian decree accepting Sparta's terms which he quotes (4.118.13–14). But, although there was a series of talks about a general peace throughout the time the armistice lasted (4.119.3), nothing came of them (mainly, one suspects, because the war in Chalkidike continued). While the negotiations for the armistice itself were going on, Skione, at the southwest tip of the Pallene peninsula, went over to Brasidas (4.120), and he was preparing to make an attempt on Mende and Poteidaia when a trireme arrived bringing an Athenian and a Spartan commissioner to announce the armistice (4.122.1). Brasidas then took his army back to Torone, and the allies of Sparta in the area accepted the truce (4.122.2).

But Skione remained a bone of contention. The Athenians claimed that its revolt had taken place after the armistice (4.122.3), whereas Brasidas claimed that it had been earlier. When the Athenian commissioner, Aristonymos, reported to Athens, the Athenians were ready to send troops against Skione at once, and despite Spartan protests and offers of arbitration, Kleon carried a decree to recapture it and execute its citizens (4.122.4–6). On the question of the timing, Thucydides positively asserts that the Athenians were in the right: Skione had revolted two days after the armistice (*loc. cit.*). But Brasidas could not possibly have known this at the time, and could hardly abandon the place once it had come over to him. To do so would have been to lose all credibility with his new allies, and would probably not have solved the problem in any case. One doubts that the people of Skione would have tamely acquiesced in giving themselves up to the tender mercies of the Athenians. Legally, one might say, the Athenians were in the right; morally, Brasidas was.

The revolt of Mende was a different case. Brasidas certainly knew by then that the armistice had been concluded, and yet he accepted its people as allies. His excuse, Thucydides says (4.123.1), was that he had grounds for accusing the Athenians of violating the truce, but since no details are given, we cannot tell how genuine this was. Possibly he argued that the Athenian refusal of arbitration over Skione was a violation of the armistice (cf. 4.118.8), but, if so, this was very

weak. On the other hand, there was again very little else he could do, if he was to maintain his credit with the Chalkidians. He also took the precaution of conveying the women and children of both Skione and Mende to Olynthos, though apparently not all from the former (see 5.32.1: below, p. 108), and of sending 500 hoplites and 300 Chalkidian peltasts, under Polydamidas, to help in the defence of the two cities (4.123.4).

The smallness of this force has been criticized, but at least it was something.⁴³ As far as we know, he had not left any troops in the other places that had come over to him, although they were now, unlike Skione and Mende, protected by the armistice. Skione and Mende were particularly vulnerable because, while Poteidaia remained in Athenian hands, they could only be reinforced by sea, and the Athenians were not likely to allow the Spartans a free hand on that element for long. On the other hand, the Athenians had so far not displayed much skill in siege-craft, and the citizens of the two places could be relied upon to defend their walls for some time. By locking up more troops in them, Brasidas would have risked weakening his field army, whereas, with that intact, he could always try to divert the Athenians from them by threatening elsewhere, or could march to their relief.

He now, however, embarked on another campaign with Perdikkas of Macedonia against Arrhabaios of Lynkos. This, too, has been criticized, but he possibly had little option. Thucydides says (4.83.6) that his previous refusal to invade Arrhabaios' territory had led Perdikkas to provide him with only a third, instead of half, his expenses, and it may be that Perdikkas now threatened to cut off payments altogether.⁴⁴ Far from risking the desertion of his mercenaries through lack of payment, Brasidas may have thought that he badly needed to increase his forces, and could have calculated that, by helping Perdikkas, he might secure further financial help, if not Macedonian military support. We have Thucydides' word for it that he at least continued to bear Mende in mind, and was anxious to return to Chalkidike as soon as possible (4.124.4).

This became apparent when, after a victory over the Lynkestians in the field, Perdikkas wanted to attack the nearby villages, but Brasidas advocated withdrawal, partly because of his anxieties over Mende, partly because they had not yet been joined by the Illyrian mercenaries hired by Perdikkas (*loc. cit.*). As it turned out, the Illyrians joined the Lynkestians instead, and the differences between the two leaders had unfortunate consequences. Their forces were encamped at some distance from each other, and when, during the night, most of Perdikkas' army made off, he had little or no option but to join them without informing Brasidas. Thus dawn found the latter deserted by his allies, and with the Illyrians and Lynkestians massing to attack him.

But Brasidas was equal to the danger. Forming his hoplites into a square, with the light troops in the centre, he ordered the younger men to charge if the enemy attacked at any point, while he himself brought up the rear with 300 picked men, prepared to stand and fight the leading enemy troops if they came too close (4.125.2–3). It has been suggested that the younger men were inside the square

and were to run out through gaps in its sides. But the point of putting the light troops inside the square was surely that they could engage the enemy over the heads of the hoplites forming the square, and it was probably the young men forming the front ranks of the square itself who were to run out. If this is so, this is the first example of what became a standard Spartan technique for hoplites dealing with lightly armed troops.⁴⁵

Also interesting is the speech Thucydides gives Brasidas, possibly based on conversations with the man himself (4.126). First, he addresses his men as 'Peloponnesians', though the majority were Chalkidians, possibly to make them all think of themselves as a 'band of brothers'.⁴⁶ Then, surprisingly, he claims that they, unlike their foes, did not live in societies where the 'few' ruled the 'many' (4.126.2), despite the oligarchic nature of most Peloponnesian states, and Sparta in particular. But probably he was primarily thinking of the fact that their enemies were ruled by absolute monarchs, whereas, even in Sparta, the kings were constrained by law and custom.

But he was particularly concerned to reassure his men against the enemy's numbers and the noise they were making. To do this he resorted to what may have been a pet theory of his own, for he makes the same point later at Amphipolis (see 5.10.5): that men who waved their arms about, far from being really threatening, would not stand their ground (4.126.5). Most interesting of all, he draws a contrast between hoplites like themselves, who considered it disgraceful to give ground, and an enemy to whom 'flight and advance had the same honourable reputation, and courage could not be tested, a way of fighting which had its own rules [*autokratôr . . . machê*]' . Here, again, he implies that all his men were hoplites, whereas in reality some were certainly light troops. But the latter were relatively safe in the centre of the square, and in any case would probably have thought of themselves as a cut above the 'barbarians' they faced. As far as the hoplites themselves were concerned, he was making a valid point. To them, it was disgraceful to 'leave the line' since each man relied on his neighbours to keep the shield-wall intact, whereas missile-armed troops, who fought as individuals, thought nothing of running away if threatened.⁴⁷

His tactics and his words of encouragement certainly worked. The enemy, faced with a resolute response, gave up attacking his force for the time being, preferring instead to go after the Macedonians. But they occupied the pass into Lynkos by which they knew he was bound to leave, and there attacked him again (4.127). He, however, ordered his 300 picked men to make for the easiest to climb of the two hills forming the pass at the double, and to dislodge the tribesmen who had occupied it before any more arrived. When the 300 had taken the hill, the rest of his army moved forward in greater safety, and the enemy gave up the pursuit. Once in Macedonia proper, his troops vented their fury on any yoke-animals they found and plundered baggage abandoned by their Macedonian allies in their flight. This, though understandable, turned Perdikkas decisively against Brasidas and led to his seeking a *rapprochement* with the Athenians (4.128).

Worse still, when Brasidas arrived back at Torone, he found that Mende had already been taken. An Athenian fleet of 50 ships, including 10 from Chios, with 1,000 Athenian hoplites, 600 archers (probably also Athenians), 1,000 Thracian mercenaries and some local peltasts, all under Nikias and Nikostratos, had assembled at Poteidaia, then sailed south to Mende, landing at the shrine of Poseidon, possibly on the cape still called Posédi. The townspeople had been reinforced by 300 men from Skione, in addition to the Peloponnesians Brasidas had left with them (4.123.4), and altogether the Spartan commander, Polydamidas, had 700 hoplites or more, and probably some light troops in addition.⁴⁸ Interestingly, instead of merely trying to defend the walls, he occupied a hill outside them, perhaps to induce the Athenians to attack him under disadvantageous conditions.

If so, the plan worked. Nikias attacked the hill from one side with light troops from Athens' ally Methone in Macedonia, picked hoplites and all the archers, while Nikostratos, perhaps as a diversion, took a longer route from another side with the rest of the army. Possibly because the attacks were uncoordinated, both failed, Nikias being beaten back first, then Nikostratos. The Athenians then retired to camp and the Mendaiaans and their allies to the city (4.129). But the Athenians had no intention of giving up, and, sailing round to the southern side of Mende, captured the suburbs and ravaged the farmland for a whole day, without any attempt being made to stop them. That night, too, the 300 troops from Skione went home, and next day, possibly in an attempt to catch them, Nikias advanced as far as their border with Mende, with half the army, laying waste to everything as he went, while Nikostratos threatened Mende from the Poteidaia side (4.130.1–2).

At this point, Polydamidas decided to try a sortie against Nikostratos, but found the people of Mende unwilling to co-operate. One of the democratic faction went so far as to shout that they would not go out and that there was no point in the war. Polydamidas made the mistake of grabbing him by the arm and starting to rough him up, but his supporters, who were evidently in the majority, seized the arms stacked near by and angrily attacked the Peloponnesians and those in sympathy with them. Some were killed on the spot, the rest took refuge on the acropolis. In the confusion the Athenian army, now rejoined by Nikias and his men, burst into the city. Since no terms had been agreed, the Athenian troops sacked the town as though it had been taken by assault, and their commanders had difficulty in stopping them from massacring its inhabitants.

But once the situation had been brought under control, Mende was treated with surprising leniency. Its people were told they could govern themselves as they had done, on condition that those held responsible for the rebellion were brought to trial, though to guarantee that this was done, the acropolis, where Polydamidas, his men and their sympathizers had taken refuge, was walled off and guarded (4.130.3–7). The Athenians then moved on to Skione, where again they found the enemy occupying a hill outside the walls. This time, however, they were successful in driving them off it, and began to construct lines round the city.

Before these could be completed, most of the men besieged on the acropolis of Mende managed to break out at night and make their way into Skione (4.131).

Meanwhile, Perdikkas of Macedonia, still smarting at the behaviour of Brasidas' troops on their retreat from Lynkos, made peace with the Athenians, and one immediate and important result was that he prevailed on his partisans in Thessaly to oppose the passage of reinforcements to Brasidas. All the latter got was three Spartan officers sent to inspect the state of affairs, and some men, mysteriously described as 'among those in the prime of life' (*hēbōntōn*: 4.132.3), they had brought to act as 'commanders' or 'governors' (*archontas*: *ibid.*) of the cities allied to the Spartans. Of these, Klearidas was appointed to Amphipolis and Pasitелidas to Torone.⁴⁹

Before the end of the truce, in spring 422, Brasidas tried a rare night assault on Poteidaia, and Thucydides gives us here a precious glimpse of the way sentries were organized. He says Brasidas got his first scaling-ladder into position at a point which a sentry had just left to pass the bell on to the next, and before he returned. Presumably the idea of passing a bell from sentry to sentry was to make sure that each man was awake, and, indeed, still alive. Here Brasidas' men were detected before they had climbed the ladder, and he immediately withdrew while it was still dark (4.135.1).

The only other incident Thucydides reports from the winter of 423/2 was a battle between Mantinea and Tegea and their allies at a place called Laodokeion in Oresthis, that is probably in southwestern Arcadia. Though Thucydides stresses that the battle was indecisive, it was symptomatic of the ill-feeling that persisted between neighbouring Peloponnesian states, even when they were both allies of Sparta. The episode also looks forward to the turmoil in the Peloponnese that was to culminate in the battle of Mantinea in 418. The battle is also interesting for the reason Thucydides gives for its being indecisive, which is that 'the men on each side defeated the wing opposite them' (4.134.1). By this he must mean that each side won on one wing, since they cannot both have won on both wings, and it is a reasonable guess that the winning wing in each case was the right. Thucydides notes in another passage (5.71.1) the tendency of hoplites to edge to the right and so create an overlap on that wing. Such stalemates even passed into tragedy (see Euripides, *Suppliants* 704–6), but they could cause heavy casualties as here. If we are to believe Thucydides (4.134.2), it was only night that put an end to the fighting.

Thucydides ends his account of the 'ninth year of the war' (423/2) with Brasidas' abortive attack on Poteidaia, and with it ends his fourth book in the surviving manuscript tradition. The fifth book begins with a sentence which hardly makes sense as it stands, but Thucydides probably wrote that the year's truce ended after it had been extended up to the Pythian Games, which were held this year between 25 July and 23 August.⁵⁰ After the truce had expired, Kleon himself sailed to Thrace with 30 ships, 1,200 Athenian hoplites and 300 cavalry, and an even larger force of allies (5.2.1).

He first put in at Skione, where he added some of the hoplites from the besieging army to his own forces, then sailed round to the 'Quiet Harbour' in the territory of Torone, which lay to the south of the city and still bears the same name.⁵¹ Here he learned from deserters that Brasidas was not in Torone and that its defenders were no match for his own forces. He immediately marched on the city with his army, ordering ten of his ships to sail round to the harbour of the city itself. Brasidas had pulled down part of the old wall because he wanted to include the suburbs in the same circuit, and it was the new wall around the suburbs that Kleon now assaulted. It was defended by the Spartan commander, Pasitelidas, and the troops he had with him, but after some resistance he began to double back to the city, fearing that it might be taken by the Athenian ships entering the harbour. As it turned out, he was too late to prevent this, and when Kleon and his army forced their way in over the part of the old wall that had been demolished, he surrendered. Brasidas, hastening to his aid, had got within about 4½ miles (7 kilometres) when he heard that the city had fallen and withdrew (5.2.2–3.3).

The fate of Torone was grim, though it might have been worse. Its women and children were sold into slavery; its menfolk, together with the Peloponnesian and other, Chalkidian, prisoners, were sent to Athens. They were exchanged, man for man, at the Peace of Nikias for prisoners held by Olynthos (5.3.4), but nothing further is said about the women and children, though some of them at least may have been ransomed.⁵²

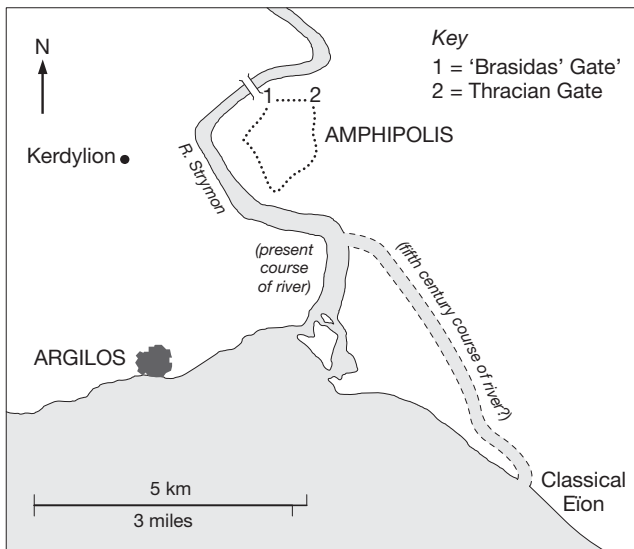
Having left a garrison at Torone, Kleon then sailed round to Athos. His ultimate target was Amphipolis (5.3.6), but, first, basing himself at Eïon, he made an unsuccessful attack on Stagiros and took Galepsos. He then sent for troops from Perdikkas of Macedonia and Polles of the Odomantian Thracians, the people with whom Aristophanes had such fun in *The Acharnians* (5.6.1–2; *Acharnians* 156ff.).⁵³ Brasidas, meanwhile, took up a position on the hill of Kerdylion, a place in Argilian territory, not far from Amphipolis and with a good view in all directions.⁵⁴ His army consisted largely of peltasts, but he also had some cavalry and 2,000 hoplites. Of these, he kept 1,500 with him at Kerdylion, but put the rest in Amphipolis under Klearidas (5.6.3–5).

Kleon was waiting for the reinforcements from Macedonia and Thrace, but was forced to move, according to Thucydides (5.7.2), by the grumblings of his men, who began to contrast Brasidas' skill and daring with their leader's lack of experience and weakness.⁵⁵ In view of Kleon's run of success – he had, after all, failed only at Stagiros – Thucydides is probably here letting his contempt for the man get the better of him. The truth of the matter, as he later admits (5.7.3), was that Kleon intended to wait for the reinforcements and then attack Amphipolis. His move makes perfect sense as a reconnaissance in force, as he said it was (*loc. cit.*), and as does his reported assumption that he could withdraw at any time without a fight (5.7.5). Accordingly, he occupied a hill, probably to the northeast, and proceeded to reconnoitre the city's environs. If Thucydides is to be believed, he was so confident that he even regretted not having brought siege-engines

with him, because he could see no troops on the walls, and no one ventured out against him (*loc. cit.*).

In fact Brasidas had entered the city as soon as he saw Kleon's army on the move (5.8.1), and prepared to surprise him. Thucydides claims that he was unwilling to risk a pitched battle because, although he had roughly the same number of men, he thought the Athenians superior in quality (5.8.1–2). If true, this is possibly not so much 'a notable tribute to the Athenian hoplite', as has been claimed,⁵⁶ as an appreciation of the fact that the kind of fighting to which his men had become accustomed was not quite of the same order as a hoplite battle. In any case, why risk one, if there was another way of winning? His plan was to make a sudden attack with 150 hoplites, while Klearidas, with the rest of the army, came out from a different gate and fell on the enemy when they were already engaged with Brasidas' men (5.8.4; cf. 9.7–8).⁵⁷

Kleon was aware that Brasidas had come down from Kerdyllion, and from the hill he himself had occupied was even able to see his opponent sacrificing at the temple of Athena. The term Thucydides uses here for 'sacrificing' (*thuomenon*: 5.10.2) is not the usual one for pre-battle sacrifice, and it may be that Brasidas was deliberately making himself conspicuous doing something unmilitary to lull Kleon further into thinking that a sortie was the last thing on his mind.⁵⁸ As it was, Kleon was apparently not aware that Brasidas intended a sortie until he was told that the whole enemy army could be seen in the city and that the feet of men and horses were visible under the gates, as though they were about to come out (5.10.2). This was, presumably, Klearidas and his men at the Thracian Gate, probably the one at the northeast corner of the city.⁵⁹



Map 6 Amphipolis

Kleon, who was some distance away, hurried to the spot and ordered a retreat, but exactly how this was to be done is unclear.⁶⁰ What Thucydides seems to mean is that Kleon ordered those on the left wing to 'retreat' towards Eïon (5.10.3), but since he then appears to criticize him for exposing his right's shieldless flank, it has been suggested that the verb he uses for 'retreat' (*hupagein*) here has some technical sense, concealing a manoeuvre whereby the left wing did not expose its shieldless flank.⁶¹ But this is far fetched and such manoeuvres as have been suggested were probably beyond Athenian troops. If the word does have any more precise meaning than simply 'retreat', it might be something like 'retreat slowly' or even 'retreat in good order'.⁶² This would make sense, since Thucydides twice says that Kleon thought he had plenty of time (5.10.3 and 4).

What he says Kleon did next has also caused controversy, but the most natural interpretation is that he meant Kleon 'turned his right and exposed his shieldless flank to the enemy', that is, he ordered his men, who were facing west towards Amphipolis in line-of-battle, to 'left turn' to the south into line-of-march.⁶³ The only difficulty is in seeing how else he could have executed a withdrawal since the enemy was to the right of his line of retreat, and why it should be implied that somehow the left did not so expose itself. But too much has been made of this. The important words in the sentence quoted above are 'to the enemy'. The left wing would also have exposed its shieldless flank, but since there was no enemy in a position to attack it, it did not matter, whereas Kleon, by ordering his right to do the same, exposed it to destruction.

What he should have done was to move his troops away from the city first, and then beat a retreat, not just carelessly expose their shieldless side because he thought he had plenty of time. Or, alternatively, he could have adopted some such method as Brasidas had used on his retreat from Lynkos, forming his men into a square, and ordering the front ranks to charge and drive away any attacking light troops.

As it was, Brasidas saw his chance. After a last few words to his men in which he drew attention to the movement of the enemy's spears and heads, and suggested that it meant they would not stand, he ordered the gate to be opened and led his men out at the double (5.10.5–6). Where this gate was is uncertain. Thucydides describes it as 'the gate leading to the palisade and the first in the long wall as it then was', and then says that Brasidas 'went at the double along that straight road where now as one goes past the strongest part of the place, the trophy stands' (5.10.6). This is a typical example of the topographical problems of studying ancient warfare. However detailed and precise one's sources are, as Thucydides, who evidently knew Amphipolis well, is here, the passing of time inevitably obliterates many of the landmarks they used. Obviously, here, it is impossible to locate a temporary structure like a palisade, and there is no trace now of the trophy. Traces of walls and gates have survived, but it is difficult to date them. Thus it has been suggested that the 'palisade' led from the wall to the bridge, at the northwest corner of the city, and that this was where Brasidas' gate was.⁶⁴ This makes sense of the description of the gate as 'the first' – the first past

the bridge – and ‘the strongest part of the place’ may well have been the north wall. Brasidas and his men would then have had further to go than Klearidas before they hit the enemy, and might have been spotted as they ran along the north wall, but if the enemy’s attention was focused on the milling feet below the Thracian Gate at the northeast corner of the *enceinte*, Brasidas’ small party might have escaped attention until it erupted past it.

Brasidas’ sudden attack, falling on men already in some confusion, and now astonished at this daring move, struck the centre of the Athenian army and routed it. At the same moment, Klearidas came out of the Thracian Gate and charged home with the main force, probably to the right (i.e. south) of Brasidas. The Athenian army was thus not only taken by surprise, but attacked at two points. The left wing, which had already progressed some distance on its retreat to Eïon, now found itself divided from the rest by Brasidas’ attack, and simply continued on its way. Brasidas’ force then wheeled to the left to attack the head of Kleon’s column-of-march. Brasidas himself was mortally wounded almost immediately, but the Athenians did not realize it, and his men were able to carry him from the field (5.10.8). One is again reminded that all hoplites would have looked very much alike, and that generals were expected to fight with their men. What is surprising here, however, is not that the Athenians did not realize what had happened, but that Brasidas’ men were apparently unaffected, unlike, for example, Epameinondas’ at the second battle of Mantinea (Xen., *Hell.* 7.2.25). But Brasidas’ force was only a small one, and was soon joined by the main body under Klearidas, so continuity of command will have been preserved, and perhaps the newcomers did not hear that Brasidas had fallen until victory was won.

The Athenian right, meanwhile, its way of retreat blocked, rallied on what Thucydides calls ‘the hill’ (5.10.9), which should mean the hill Kleon had occupied when he first moved up to Amphipolis (5.7.4).⁶⁵ There they put up a stout resistance, flinging Klearidas’ men back three times. Kleon himself, however, was killed almost immediately by a Myrkinian peltast, which presumably means he was hit by a javelin. Whether or not he was guilty of cowardice, as Thucydides implies (5.10.9), it is impossible to say. He had stayed with the right, the rear, when the retreat began, as a good general should, and even if he was running away when hit, he may merely have been running to join his men. But we certainly should not rely on the evidence of Diodoros (12.74.2) to prove Thucydides wrong.⁶⁶ Kleon’s men finally gave way only when the Myrkinian and Chalkidian cavalry came up, and the peltasts surrounded them. Some managed to get away to Eïon along tracks through the hills, but about six hundred Athenians in all were killed, presumably mostly from the right wing, for allegedly only seven of the enemy (5.11.2).

Brasidas, like Nelson, lived long enough to hear of his victory, and, when he died, his army paraded for his funeral. After it, the people of Amphipolis enclosed his tomb, and thereafter treated him as a hero, holding annual games and sacrifices in his honour. They also officially recognized him as the founder of their city,

and demolished all the buildings of the original Athenian founder, Hagnon, in an attempt to obliterate anything that might remind them of him (5.11.1).

After recovering their dead, the Athenian force went home, leaving Klearidas in command at Amphipolis (5.11.3). Reinforcements from Sparta had been on their way, and had reached Herakleia in Trachinia when the battle was fought. They moved on to Pierion in Thessaly, but there they heard of Brasidas' death, and, finding the Thessalians reluctant to grant them safe passage, returned home. Thucydides says that their reasoning was that the Athenians had already gone home and that they were not capable of carrying out Brasidas' plans, but mainly that they knew that the Spartans were already in favour of peace when they set out (5.13). In fact, peace was concluded the following year.

PHONEY PEACE

The peace concluded early in 421 and usually called the ‘Peace of Nikias’ after the Athenian general of that name, was unsatisfactory from the start. It came about, as Thucydides makes clear (5.14), only because the two principal belligerents had temporarily lost their nerve. The Athenians had suffered defeat at Delion and Amphipolis, and were worried about revolt in their empire. The Spartans were disillusioned by their failure to win by the usual means, dismayed by what had happened on Sphakteria, and alarmed by the helot situation. In addition, their Thirty Years’ Peace with the Argives was on the point of expiring, and they suspected, rightly as it turned out, that some of their disaffected Peloponnesian allies might seek to join their rivals. In Athens, finally, the death of Kleon left the way open for the more peaceably inclined Nikias, while in Sparta, similarly, King Pleistoanax was anxious to exploit the removal of Brasidas to put an end to talk that Sparta’s disasters were due to the illegal way he had been restored (5.16–17.1).

Even then, according to Thucydides (5.17.2), it took a Spartan threat to build a permanent base in Attica to bring the Athenians to the conference table, and this is puzzling. Ever since their victory on Sphakteria, according to him (4.41.1), the Athenians had threatened to kill their prisoners if the Spartans invaded Attica, and he stresses that one of the principal reasons why the Spartans wanted to make peace was to recover the prisoners. But if he is right, they had been prepared to sacrifice them before the armistice in 423/2 (4.117.2), and now they perhaps calculated that Athenian minds would be concentrated by their determination to pursue the war more vigorously even if it meant the prisoners’ deaths. They could always abandon the plan if their bluff was called. After much discussion, then, possibly partly conducted by ten commissioners from each party (cf. DS 12.75.4),¹ agreement was reached. Each side was to give back what it had acquired during the war, but the Athenians were to retain Nisaia in exchange for Plataia.

When, however, the Spartans put these proposals to their allies, although the majority accepted them, and peace was concluded (cf. 5.18–19), they were rejected by the Boiotians, Corinthians, Eleians and Megarians (5.17.2). Of these, the Boiotians objected to surrendering Panakton (cf. 5.18.7), a fortress on their

border with Attica they had captured in 422 (5.3.5). The Corinthians claimed that they felt bound by the undertakings they had given Poteidaia and other places in Thrace (5.30.2–4), though they were really annoyed that there was nothing in the terms about Sollion and Anaktorion (cf. 5.30.2), their lost colonies in the northwest (cf. 2.30.1 and 4.49). The Eleians had no particular objection to the terms, but had a private quarrel with the Spartans over Lepreon (5.31.1–5), while the Megarians, naturally, bitterly resented the loss of Nisaia.

The terms relating to the cities of Thrace (5.18.5–6) were an insult to them.² Amphipolis was to be surrendered to Athens; the inhabitants of other, unspecified, places to be handed over were to be allowed to depart with their, presumably, moveable property; and Argilos, Stagiros, Akanthos, Skolos and even Olynthos and Spartolos were to revert to paying tribute to the Athenians, though they were to be ‘autonomous’, and allies of neither the Spartans nor the Athenians unless the latter could again persuade them to become so. As for Skione, though it was apparently still holding out, the Peloponnesian and other allies of Sparta besieged there were to be allowed to depart, with the prisoners the Athenians held. But the fate of the rest of its people was left to the Athenians, who had already carried a decree, on Kleon’s motion, to execute all adult males and sell the women and children (4.122.5). The Athenians were also to be allowed to decide the fate of other cities, such as Torone, which they already held (5.18.7–8).³ Unsurprisingly, these cities refused to accept the peace. To his credit, Kleiaridas, Brasidas’ lieutenant in Amphipolis, declared that he would not surrender the city, ostensibly because he could not do so against its people’s wishes. Realizing this might land him in trouble, he returned to Sparta with representatives from Amphipolis to try to amend the treaty, but was sent back under orders to surrender the city if possible, but in any case to evacuate any Peloponnesians who were there (5.21).⁴

The paradoxical result of all this was that the Spartans, in addition to the peace treaty, now concluded a defensive alliance (*epimachia*) with the Athenians. By it the two states bound themselves to come to each other’s aid if attacked, and, in particular, the Athenians undertook to help the Spartans in the event of a helot uprising (5.23.3).⁵ One can understand why such an alliance was in the Spartans’ interests at the time, but what was in it for the Athenians is less clear. However, it provided some guarantee against attacks on Attica by the Spartans themselves or any of their recalcitrant allies (the Boiotians above all) and may also have seemed to its advocates, and Nikias in particular, to promise a return to the *entente* of the 460s.⁶ It was thus possibly in a mood of euphoria that the Athenians at last handed back the Sphakteria prisoners, the Spartans having already handed over those they held (5.21.1).

The peace terms also obliged the Athenians to surrender Pylos, Kythera, Methana, Pteleon and Atalante (5.18.7), but we know they continued to hold on to Pylos, although, after Spartan representations, they did agree to withdraw the Messenians, helots and other deserters, and garrison the fort themselves (5.35.7). They also apparently held on to Kythera until at least 413, since there

were Kytherians in their forces in Sicily (7.57.6), though these might have been Athenian sympathizers who fled the island after it was restored to Spartan control. Of the other places, what happened to Methana and Atalante is uncertain, but they were probably handed back to Trozen and Lokris, respectively, since the Athenians do not subsequently appear to have made use of either place. As for 'Pteleon', we do not even know where it was or when the Athenians acquired it.⁷

The conclusion of peace and the alliance between the Athenians and Spartans were followed by a confused period in which, first, the Mantineians, Eleians, Corinthians and Chalkidians of Thrace joined the Argives in a new alliance (5.27–31), though neither the Boiotians nor the Megarians took part, despite their hostility to the peace. Significantly, Thucydides says (5.31.6), this was because they were 'left alone by the Spartans and considered the democracy of the Argives less congenial to them as oligarchic states than the political system of the Spartans'. The new allies also failed to win over Tegea, Arcadia's most important city after Mantinea, probably because of its hostility towards the latter. As a result, the Corinthians, too, began to get cold feet (5.32.3–4).⁸

Meanwhile, the Athenians finally reduced Skione, exacting the savage penalty originally proposed by Kleon (5.32.1), but made no move to recover Amphipolis or any of the other rebel towns in Thrace. Even when the people of Dion captured neighbouring Thyssos, which was also one of their allies, they did not interfere (5.35.1), though the Dians' action foreshadowed their revolt four years later (5.82.1). At the same time the Spartans moved to curtail the Mantineians' growing influence in western Arcadia (5.33). A Mantineian presence there threatened the route to Messenia round the northern end of Taygetos.⁹ The Spartans also settled the survivors of Brasidas' 700 helots at Lepreon on the border with Elis, with the first *neodamôdeis* (5.34.1).

In the autumn of 421, new ephors, some of whom were opposed to the peace with Athens (5.36.1),¹⁰ took office in Sparta. This led to another round of tortuous diplomacy, essentially designed to bring the Argives and their new allies, as well as the Boiotians, back into the Spartan fold (5.36–8). In the end, the negotiations foundered, mainly because of the secrecy in which they were conducted. The Boiotian federal council, in particular, refused to accept the boiotarchs' proposal that the Boiotians should join the Argive alliance, because it was unaware that they had been secretly in touch with the ephors hostile to the peace. The boiotarchs had agreed to try to get the Boiotians to join the alliance as a prelude to bringing its members over to the Spartan side, but to the council it appeared as though they were being led into the anti-Spartan camp (5.38.2–3).

In the end, desperate to recover Pylos, the Spartans asked the Boiotians to hand over to them Panakton and the prisoners they held, hoping they could exchange them for Pylos. The Boiotians agreed, but only on condition that the Spartans concluded a separate alliance with them, as they had done with the Athenians. According to Thucydides (5.39.3), the Spartans were aware that this

would contravene their alliance with the Athenians, but they went ahead none the less.¹¹ Worse still, the Boiotians began to demolish Panakton. Thus, although the prisoners the Boiotians held were handed over to the Spartans and by them in turn to the Athenians, the latter were furious about Panakton and the Spartans' separate alliance with the Boiotians (5.42.3).

This gave an opportunity to those Athenians whom Thucydides describes as 'wishing to end the peace' (5.43.1). One of these was Alkibiades, who now makes his first appearance on the scene. His motives followed a pattern that was to become familiar. Thucydides says (5.43.2) Alkibiades thought a *rapprochement* with the Argives would be in Athenian interests, but was also piqued that the peace had been negotiated through Nikias and Laches rather than himself. Before his grandfather had given up the post, his family had been Spartan *proxenoi* ('consuls') at Athens, and he had himself tried to revive the connection by cultivating the Sphakteria prisoners. Now he sent a private message to the Argives, urging them to send representatives to Athens to discuss an alliance, together with the Mantineians and Eleians, and promising his help (5.43.3).

As it happened, the Argives, worried by the Spartan alliance with the Boiotians and fearing isolation, had already sent representatives to Sparta and had succeeded in securing a renewal of their treaty. The terms had yet to be put to the Argive assembly, however, and it was before the Argive representatives returned from Sparta that Alkibiades' message arrived. The message reassured the Argives that, far from being isolated, there was every likelihood of a breakdown in relations between the Spartans and Athenians. Possibly, then, if they were to find themselves at war with the Spartans, they might now have as allies a people who had long been on friendly terms with them, had a similar democratic system and were still dominant at sea. Accordingly, making no attempt to contact the representatives they had sent to Sparta, they now sent others to Athens, together with envoys from Elis and Mantinea (5.44.1–2).

There followed a bizarre series of episodes in Athens (5.44.3ff.). Presumably getting wind of the Argive embassy, the Spartans, too, sent envoys to try to placate the Athenians, but also to press for the handing over of Pylos in return for Panakton, and to apologize for the Boiotian alliance (5.44.3). As was usual, these envoys were first brought before the council of Five Hundred, where they claimed to have full powers, and this caused Alkibiades some anxiety. He feared that if the envoys made the same declaration before the assembly, they might win over the people, and the alliance with the Argives would be rejected (5.45.1). So he contrived to convince them that if they did not make a similar claim before the people, he would secure the return of Pylos and would help to arrange the other matters. His object was to drive a wedge between them and Nikias, and to give himself an opening to attack them for insincerity before the assembly, and so secure the alliance with Argos, Elis and Mantinea (5.45.2–3). The result was that when the Spartan envoys addressed the assembly and were asked about the extent of their authority, they denied that they had full powers, and this turned the people decisively against them and in favour of Alkibiades.

But why did the Spartan ambassadors listen to Alkibiades rather than Nicias in the first place, and why, in particular, were they not suspicious of his suggestion that they should deny they had full powers in return for his promise of support? Plutarch (*Alk.* 14.7) says Alkibiades argued that whereas the council was reasonable, if the people heard that the envoys had full powers, they would begin to make further, excessive, demands. But this does not really solve the difficulty. The Spartans would have known that Alkibiades was in favour of the Argive alliance, and would have needed to be convinced that his change of heart was genuine. Would they not have wondered why a denial of their competence should be to his advantage? Perhaps the answer is that they were so desperate to prevent an alliance between the Athenians and Argives that they welcomed Alkibiades' overture without really considering what he was up to. Everything we know about Alkibiades suggests that he thrived on such situations. In any case, too much has been made of the Spartans' denial of full powers. No envoys could literally have had the power to make any agreement they wished, and the claim before the council can only have been that they had the power to settle certain specific issues. What Alkibiades asked, therefore, may not have seemed such a contradiction.¹²

As it happened, an earthquake put an end to the assembly before a decision could be reached (5.45.4), and when it reconvened next day, Nicias was able to persuade it to send him and other envoys to Sparta to find out what the Spartans intended, and to demand the restoration of Panakton intact, the surrender of Amphipolis and the renunciation of the Boiotian alliance unless the Boiotians accepted the peace (5.46.1–2). This ultimatum the Spartans naturally rejected, since the last demand was the only one they were in a position to fulfil, and when Nicias and his fellow-ambassadors returned to Athens, the alliance with Argos, Mantinea and Elis was immediately concluded. Thus the Athenians at last gained the Peloponnesian allies they needed if they were ever to have a chance against the Spartans on land. The battle of Mantinea was to show that even without the Eleian army, and with probably only 1,000 Athenian hoplites present, the alliance could make a fight of it, and a Spartan defeat there might well have had even more catastrophic results than Leuktra. There can be no doubt that Alkibiades' coup, however achieved, was a masterstroke.¹³

The new alliance also clarified the situation. The Athenians and Spartans still remained at peace and technically allied to each other. The Corinthians, although allied to the Argives, did not join the new alliance, despite an approach from its members (5.50.5), and, Thucydides says (5.48.3), 'again began to be favourably disposed towards the Spartans'. The Boiotians, however, although also disinclined towards joining the new alliance, remained hostile to the Spartans. Early in 419, they seized the Spartan colony at Herakleia and expelled its Spartan governor (5.52.1). Although Thucydides says their motive was fear of an Athenian take-over, he also says their action annoyed the Spartans, as it surely did. The Olympic Games of 420 also gave the new allies an opportunity to show their teeth. The Eleians, in pursuance of their dispute over Lepreon, chose to debar the Spartans

from taking part in the Games on the grounds that they had violated the Olympic truce. Fearing retaliation, they kept their younger men under arms, and were also supported by allied troops, including Athenian cavalry, though, in the end, the festival passed off peacefully (5.49–50.4).

The first military actions of the new allies came early in 419. Alkibiades was now *stratēgos*,¹⁴ and, with a few Athenian hoplites and archers bolstered by troops from the Athenians' new Peloponnesian allies, marched through the Peloponnese, and persuaded the people of Patrai (Patras) to construct 'long walls' down to the sea. Patrai was an Achaian city, and the Achaians were nominally allies of the Spartans (cf. 2.9.2 and 90.1), but it is fairly clear that Pellene was the only city which showed consistent loyalty to them, and the presence of Alkibiades' army would have reinforced the impression of Spartan weakness. The long walls were intended to make Patrai invulnerable to Spartan attack while the Athenians remained supreme at sea.¹⁵ Alkibiades also tried to build a fort at Rhion, at the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth. With the Athenians still occupying Naupaktos on the opposite coast, northeast of Rhion, a fort here would have gone far towards closing the gulf to hostile shipping, but troops from Corinth and Sikyon prevented its building (5.52.2).

The first important action of the anti-Spartan alliance was an Argive attack on Epidauros. Thucydides says the excuse was religious, but that the real reason was that Alkibiades and the Argives had agreed to try to gain control of Epidauros, as a check on the Corinthians, and to ease communications between Athenian forces based on Aigina and Argos (5.53). Although the country between Corinth and Epidauros is difficult, a hostile Epidauros would effectively have prevented Corinthian interference in the rest of the Argolid, and communications between Epidauros and Argos are relatively easy.¹⁶ The Spartans responded by marching in full force to Leuktra on their frontier with Arcadia.¹⁷ Thucydides says not even those of Sparta's allies that had sent contingents knew the objective (5.54.1),¹⁸ and from Leuktra the army could have marched northwest towards Elis or northeast towards Argos and Epidauros. The frontier-sacrifices proved unfavourable, however, and the Spartans returned home, ordering their allies to be ready for another campaign at the end of the following month (5.54.2).

It is difficult to say whether the religious reason for the Spartan withdrawal was genuine or merely an excuse, and the difficulty is compounded by the similar incident later in the summer (5.55.3).¹⁹ But the Spartans were a religious people, and to suggest that the unfavourable sacrifices were 'a pretext by which the sudden withdrawal was explained to the army' assumes that the authorities were less religious than the majority. In fact, there is no reason to believe that the kings, who performed such sacrifices and had a peculiarly intimate relationship with the gods (cf. Xen., *LP* 13.2–3 and 15.2; Hdt. 6.56–8), were any less religious. We should, rather, seek to understand the psychology of people who believed in such things. Here, perhaps, the Spartans were in some doubt about the wisdom of a showdown with the new alliance at this juncture, but decided

to mobilize. In such a situation, if the doubts had been dissipated by the time the army reached the frontier, the sacrifices might have appeared favourable. With the doubts remaining, they appeared unfavourable.

'Rationalizing' explanations for the abortive campaign are not convincing, and it is particularly difficult to believe that sacrifices were twice 'rigged' in some way. It has been suggested, for example, that differing factions among the Spartans lay behind these episodes, and that those who engineered the religious objection to proceeding wanted to give time for Argive oligarchs to swing their fellow-citizens round to renewing their treaty with the Spartans.²⁰ But it is difficult to believe that one faction could secure mobilization for a campaign and then its opponents almost immediately secure its abandonment in this way. As for pro-Spartan Argive oligarchs, they probably only became really influential after the Spartan victory at Mantinea (cf. 5.76).

But if Spartan respect for sacrifices was genuine, the Argives were evidently less scrupulous. Once the Spartans had withdrawn, 'on the fourth day before the end of the month before *Karneios*' (5.54.3), they marched into Epidaurian territory, avoiding the taboo against campaigning during the *Karneian* month by dating each succeeding day the same, so that, as far as they were concerned, *Karneios* did not begin until after the invasion was over. This may seem ludicrous to us, but we should remember that all Greek states used a lunar calendar and thus had to intercalate days from time to time to bring their calendars into line with the solar year. Here the Argives simply chose to intercalate a series of days before *Karneios*. The episode does show that religion could be manipulated, but it also shows how seriously it was taken. If no one had bothered about the sacred month, there would have been no need to resort to such chicanery. As it was, though the Epidaurians called on their allies for help, some cited the taboo as an excuse; others advanced as far as the border and then withdrew (5.54.4).

At this point, the Athenians summoned a conference at Mantinea, ostensibly to bring an end to hostilities, and the Argives withdrew from Epidauria when a member of the Corinthian delegation protested that while they were talking about peace, a war was going on (5.55.1). It has sometimes been thought that this Athenian initiative was due to a change in the political situation at Athens,²¹ but it is more likely that it was engineered by Alkibiades and his supporters to provide a forum for airing complaints about the Spartans, and possibly to win over the Corinthians, who were still technically allied to the Argives. As it turned out, nothing came of the conference, and the Argives reinvaded Epidauria. It was this that led to a second Spartan mobilization, which, like the first, proved abortive, again ostensibly because the sacrifices at the border were unfavourable. But this time the army had marched to Karyai, and this leaves little doubt that it was heading for Argos.

At the end of the campaigning season of 419, the Spartans again demonstrated how easy it was, if one were bold, to carry out operations by sea even in the face of overwhelming naval superiority, by slipping 300 troops into Epidaurus (5.56.1). The Argives complained bitterly to the Athenians that this contravened

the clause in their treaty that stipulated that the parties should not allow hostile forces through their territory. But though it was absurd to imply that the Saronic Gulf was Athenian territory,²² the Argives exploited the Athenians' obvious embarrassment to insist that the Messenians and runaway helots be sent back to Pylos. Meanwhile, the war in Epidauria also continued, and at one time, early in 418, the Argives brought up siege-ladders to Epidaurus itself, hoping to surprise it, though the attempt failed (5.56.4–6).

In midsummer (probably July) 418, the Spartans again mobilized, and this time on an unprecedented scale. Thucydides says (5.57.1) they realized Epidaurus was hard pressed and were anxious about the apparent disintegration of their Peloponnesian alliance. But if so, why not mobilize at the beginning of the campaigning season? One suggestion is that they were waiting for the new *stratēgoi* to take office in Athens, since they knew that those elected in the spring favoured peace and hoped they would prevent the Athenians from interfering. More particularly, they knew that Alkibiades had failed to be re-elected and would thus cease to be *stratēgos* at the same time. But this presupposes that Athenian politics were like those of a modern state, where people are elected on the basis of their known views. Ancient politics were not like that. The Athenians, for example, were perfectly capable of electing a man *stratēgos* but voting for his opponents' policies, as the Sicilian expedition was to show. Nor was election to the office of *stratēgos* necessarily the be-all and end-all of a man's ambition, as Kleon had demonstrated, and Alkibiades might have preferred to keep his options open at this juncture.²³

There are simpler explanations. First, it may have taken time for the Spartans' resolution to harden: we have Thucydides' word for it that they were 'slow to embark on wars' (1.118.2), and they also had to secure the agreement of their allies, who had been reluctant to aid Epidaurus the previous year (5.54.4). Since they proposed to mobilize the helots in greater force than usual (5.57.1), they possibly also had to wait until the grain was harvested, and this may have been a consideration for their allies, too (cf. 3.15.2).²⁴ Thus July may have been the earliest feasible time for a campaign on the planned scale.

Unfortunately, although Thucydides gives us some figures for the allied contingents who met the Spartans at Phleious (5.57.2), he gives us none for the Spartans themselves, nor for the Tegeates and other Arcadians who joined them earlier. We can only guess how many there were of the latter, but the Tegeates could probably muster well over 2,000 hoplites altogether, and may have mobilized as many as 2,000 for this campaign, while the other remaining Arcadian allies, with Orchomenos still loyal, could probably have mustered another 1,000.²⁵ As for the Spartans, Thucydides uses a similar expression for their mass mobilization for the Mantinea campaign later in the year (5.57.1 and 64.2). This suggests that the numbers were similar, and he gives us figures for the Spartan army at the battle of Mantinea (5.68.3), which probably come to 4,484 men. But, although this figure has been used as a basis for estimating the number of Spartan troops in the earlier campaign,²⁶ it is almost certainly too small; the real

number was probably just over 8,000 (see below, pp. 121–2). In short, the Spartans probably now had about 11,000 hoplites after their Arcadian allies joined them.²⁷

Thucydides says that the Spartan preparations had been known to the Argives from the first, and when the Spartans began their march towards Phleious, the Argives were joined by the Mantineians and their Arcadian allies and by 3,000 hoplites from Elis (5.58.1). Again he gives no figures for either the Argives or the Mantineians and other Arcadians, but the Argives probably amounted to 6,000 or 7,000, and Diodoros' figure of 'not much fewer' than 3,000 for the Mantineians later in the campaign (12.78.4) may be right.

The Argives and their allies were obviously anxious to prevent the junction of the Spartans with their other allies at Phleious, and succeeded in intercepting their march at Methydrion in Arcadia, some 2 miles (3.2 kilometres) west of the modern town of Vitína (5.58.1). The Spartans would have wanted to avoid the direct route to Phleious because the Mantineians were hostile, and after picking up the Tegeates had probably swung west of Mainalon. At Methydrion the two armies occupied hills opposite each other, and the Argives and their allies prepared to fight. But during the night, the Spartans slipped away to Phleious (5.58.2). It has been suggested that Agis thus avoided a desperate situation, but this is based on a false estimate of the size of his army. Odds of, say, 11,000 to 12,000 or even 13,000 would not have seemed 'desperate' to a Spartan.²⁸ But it would have been the height of folly to have risked an engagement when by avoiding one and reaching Phleious he could probably more than double his strength (see below).

Nor is it fair to blame the Argives for letting him go.²⁹ It would have been inconceivable to fight a battle at night, and even if the Argives were aware of his departure, there was little they could have done about it. But they were probably not aware. Classical Greek armies were notoriously poor at keeping a good look-out, and in any case all Agis had to do was to leave his camp-fires burning, in the approved fashion. There is certainly no need to indulge in far-fetched speculation about the Argive army's being commanded by oligarchic generals who deliberately let the Spartans go. Thucydides knew that such behaviour was possible (cf., e.g., 3.70.1), and would have said so if he had had the slightest inkling that this is what happened here.

At Phleious Agis found waiting a Boiotian army of 5,000 hoplites, 5,000 light troops, 500 cavalry and 500 '*hamhippoi*', infantry trained to co-operate with cavalry. In addition, there were 2,000 hoplites from Corinth, contingents from Epidauros, Pellene in Achaia, Megara and Sikyon, and the entire army of Phleious itself (5.57.2 and 58.4). In all, there were probably at least 10,000 hoplites, and Thucydides later describes Agis' command as 'the finest Greek army assembled to this date' (5.60.3). Meanwhile, the Argives and their allies returned to Argos, and then took up a position guarding what Thucydides calls 'the road to Nemea' (5.58.3), which was clearly the road running from Phleious via Nemea to join the main road from Corinth to Argos.

However, although Agis ordered the Boiotians, Megarians and Sikyonians to use this route, which was the only feasible one for the Boiotian cavalry, he himself, with the Spartans, Arcadians and Epidaurians, made his way down to the Argive plain by what Thucydides describes (*loc. cit.*) as ‘another, difficult route’, probably to the west round Mount Keloussa. The Corinthians, Pellenians and Phleisians marched by yet another ‘steep’ road, probably between the main road via Nemea and the one taken by Agis (5.58.4).³⁰

When the Argives realized that Agis was in their rear, they left Nemea and began to march back. On their way, they came into contact with the Corinthians, Pellenians and Phleisians, and killed a few of the last, but lost a few more themselves at the hands of the Corinthians (5.59.1). Meanwhile, the Boiotians, Megarians and Sikyonians advanced towards Nemea as ordered, and found the Argives gone. The latter, having reached the plain, were deploying for battle, while the Spartans were forming up to their front. The Argives and their allies now appeared to be in a desperate situation. The Spartans and those with them were between them and the city, the Corinthians, Phleisians and Pelleneans were above them on their right, and behind them the Boiotians, Sikyonians and Megarians were approaching from the direction of Nemea (5.59.2–3). Even Napoleon would have been proud to have organized such an example of how to march divided and fight united as Agis had done.

Most of the Argives and their allies, however, far from thinking that they were in danger, believed that they had the advantage, since they had caught the Spartans between them and the city of Argos (5.59.4). Thucydides seems to have thought they were wrong, but he was writing with hindsight. It seems fairly clear that the Boiotians, Sikyonians and Megarians had not yet reached the plain and may still have been out of sight,³¹ and it is possible that after their brush with the Corinthians, Phleisians and Pelleneans, the Argives felt they could ignore them. In any case, if they had 12,000 hoplites or more, and Agis about 11,000, they may have thought that even if the Corinthians and those with them did try to intervene, they could still win, particularly if those left in Argos itself were to intervene.

Just as battle was about to be joined, however, Thrasylos, one of the five Argive generals, and Alkiphron, the Spartan *proxenos* at Argos, offered to submit the Spartans’ complaints to arbitration and to conclude a peace treaty (5.59.5). Thucydides emphasizes that they were acting on their own initiative, and without the authority of the Argive people, and Agis, too, consulted only one of ‘those in authority’ who had accompanied the army,³² before agreeing to a four-month truce and leading away his army (5.60.1).

Broadly speaking, there are two views about this astonishing episode, one seeking a military explanation, the other a political one.³³ Certainty is not possible, but on balance the military explanation is to be preferred. It is by no means certain that the Boiotians, Sikyonians and Megarians were near enough to intervene, and, more importantly, that Agis knew that they were. If he did not, he might well have feared for his own position. The Argives and their allies were

between him and the Boiotian, Sikyonian and Megarian forces, and may thus have known of their approach before he did. But even if they, too, did not, Thrasylos and Alkiphron, unlike the mass of their fellow-countrymen, may well have considered the odds unacceptable.

The political explanation depends on the assumption that Thrasylos and Alkiphron were oligarchs who wanted peace with the Spartans for their own ends, and that Agis and the man he consulted likewise wanted peace. But there is no evidence that Thrasylos and Alkiphron were oligarchs, and, as for Agis and the man he consulted, there is again no evidence that they acted for any other reason than that they thought the Spartan position precarious. Both the two Argives and the two Spartans will have known that what they proposed to do was likely to prove unpopular, and would have needed more compelling reasons than a vague desire for peace to induce them to take the risk.

Those who seek a political explanation have also made too much of the Athenian failure to arrive in time. Thus it is suggested that the alleged Argive oligarchs hoped to use the delay to discredit the alliance with the Athenians, and that conversely Agis was afraid of the imminent arrival of Athenian forces or the possibility that they might raid Lakonia in his absence. It is even suggested that the delay was deliberate and due to disagreement among the Athenians.³⁴ But all this is far fetched. Any Athenian force would have to come by sea, and although it should not have taken longer than the Eleian army, for example, took to march across the Peloponnese, when it did arrive it included cavalry (5.61.1), and carrying horses by sea was not so simple. It required modified triremes, and if those constructed in 430 (2.56.2) were not still available, new ones would have had to be prepared.³⁵ In any case, any delay is just as likely to have been due to inefficiency of one sort or another as to something more sinister, and the Athenians were not to know when and if a battle would take place. To suggest that they delayed 'in the hope of arriving too late' is absurd.³⁶ As for Agis' alleged fears, one wonders whether he even knew Athenian forces were on their way, or cared very much if he did.

Finally, Thucydides' views on what happened should not be so cavalierly dismissed. He evidently thought that the reason why both Agis and the two Argives came in for such criticism was because they had failed to take advantage of what both sides believed to be a splendid opportunity. The Spartans were later to punish Agis by limiting his authority in an unprecedented way (5.63.4), while Thrasylos barely escaped death by stoning, and his property was confiscated (5.60.6). Only Alkiphron, apparently, suffered no penalty, perhaps because it was recognized that as the Spartan *proxenos* he was merely doing his duty. The only hint that political considerations lay behind these reactions is Thucydides' statement that the Argives blamed those who had made the truce for acting 'without the majority' (*aneu tou plêthous*: 5.60.5), and this does not prove Thrasylos was an oligarch. A democrat was just as likely to be blamed in a democracy. In Agis' case, Thucydides makes the point that his troops, both Spartan and allied, had to obey him 'by law' (*dia ton nomon*: 5.60.2). This is a reminder that

a Spartan king's powers, like those of a Roman consul, were virtually absolute on campaign. His men could grumble all they liked, but there was nothing they could do until they got back to Sparta. Even when they did, it was not his 'enemies' (*echthroi*: cf. 5.16.1) but 'the Spartans' (*Lakedaimonioi*: 5.63.1) who went for him.

In the meantime, 1,000 Athenian hoplites and 300 cavalry arrived at Argos, and at first the Argives refused to allow Athenian representatives to address their assembly. This reaction has again been put down to the oligarchic faction among the Argives,³⁷ but there is no reason to suppose this. The Argives in general were furious at what had happened, and democrats are just as likely to have been angry at the late arrival of the Athenians as oligarchs, perhaps even more so since Athenian dilatoriness might well play into oligarchic hands. But, in the end, they were prevailed upon by the Mantineians and Eleians to allow the Athenians access to the assembly.

Thucydides says Alkibiades had accompanied the Athenians as ambassador (5.61.2),³⁸ and although he does not state that it was he who addressed the Argive assembly, what he says 'the Athenians' said (5.61.2) bears all the hallmarks of Alkibiades' way of dealing with such a situation. Far from apologizing for the late arrival of the Athenian troops, 'the Athenians' declared that a truce should not even have been concluded without the consent of the Argives' allies, and that now that the Athenians had so opportunely arrived, they should get on with the war. This has been described as 'effrontery',³⁹ but it was true that one of the terms of the alliance was that none of the parties should 'end the war' (5.47.4) without the agreement of all, and although the four-month truce hardly 'ended the war', if Thucydides is right, Thrasylos and Alkiphron had undertaken to conclude a peace treaty (5.59.5). As for the opportune arrival of the Athenian forces, it was arguable that their earlier arrival would not have changed the situation, since the enemy forces as a whole would still have greatly outnumbered those of the alliance. But now that the enemy army had dispersed, the Athenians could help to further the allied cause.⁴⁰

These Athenian arguments won the day, and the Mantineian, Eleian and Athenian forces immediately marched against Orchomenos in Arcadia, to be joined slightly later by the Argives. Thucydides does not comment on this, but he makes it clear that they were in full agreement with their allies (5.61.3), and their delay does not necessarily indicate reluctance. Possibly a new general had to be elected to replace Thrasylos, and presumably a message had to be sent to the Spartans to make it clear that the Argives were not standing by the truce.

Thucydides implies that the main reason for the choice of Orchomenos as an objective was that the Spartans had left hostages from Arcadia there (5.61.4). But it was also strategically located. It lay on the hill above the modern village of Kalpaki, and thus probably commanded the very route Agis had earlier used to bypass Mantinea; it may have been then that the Spartans deposited their hostages there.⁴¹ While the city was naturally strong, its fortifications were weak, and, after a brief siege, the Orchomenians surrendered. The terms were that they be

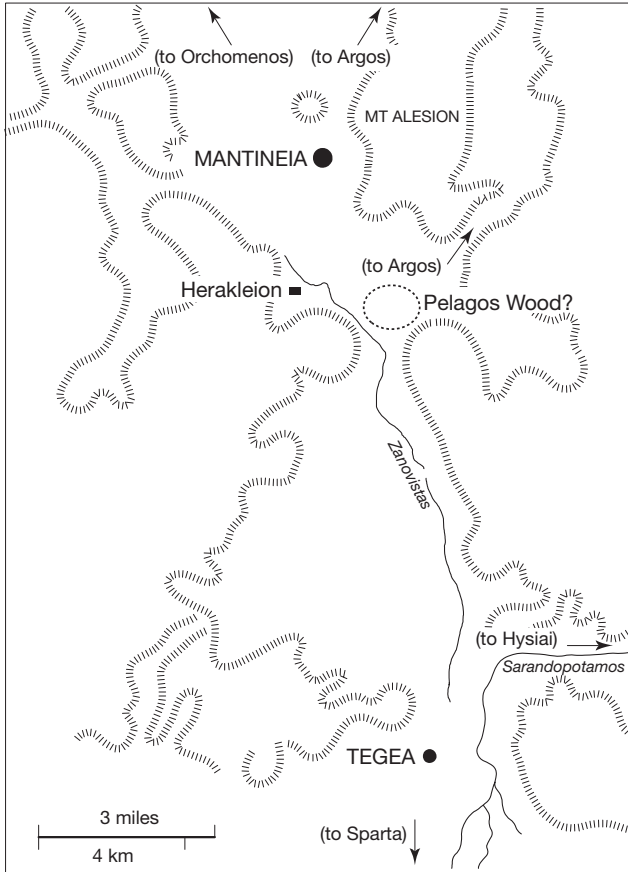
admitted to the alliance, give hostages to the Mantineians, and surrender those left there by the Spartans (5.61.5).

So far the campaign had been a success, but now there was a fatal disagreement among the allies. The Eleians demanded that their next objective be Lepreon, but the Mantineians were for Tegea, and when they were supported by the Argives and Athenians, the Eleians went off in a huff (5.62). One can understand their point of view. Their main reason for being in the alliance in the first place was their dispute with the Spartans over Lepreon (cf. 5.31.1–5), and the Mantineian preference for an attack on Tegea could be deemed just as parochial. But from a wider strategic point of view, Lepreon was a side-show, whereas winning over Tegea would deprive the Spartans of their oldest and staunchest allies in the Peloponnese, and Thucydides says that there were some Tegeates in favour of secession (5.62.2).

The events of this momentous year now moved to a climax. For all their anger with King Agis, the Spartans had so far taken no action, but now they responded furiously to news of the fall of Orchomenos. At first they were for demolishing the king's house as a symbol of disgrace and fining him 100,000 *drachmai*,⁴² but, in response to his pleas and promises to atone, they settled for passing an unprecedented law to attach ten advisers to him. According to our text of Thucydides, he was no longer to have the authority to lead an army 'from the city' (*ek tês poleôs*: 5.63.4) without their consent. But a king could not do this, in any case, without the authority of the Spartan people, so possibly what Thucydides actually wrote was that he was not to be allowed to lead an army 'from enemy territory' (*ek tês polemias*) without the advisers' consent. It was precisely his right to abandon a campaign on his own initiative that the Spartans now wanted to restrict.⁴³

It has also been suggested that the fact that the Spartans refrained from taking action against Agis until they heard of the defection of Orchomenos reinforces the notion that his reasons for making the truce with the Argives were political rather than military. While there was still some prospect of peace with the Argives, it is argued, the Spartans were prepared to overlook his failure to crush them when he had the chance, but once it became clear that not even the truce had held, they lost all patience with him.⁴⁴ But this could still be true if his reasons for making the truce had been military.

It was, in any case, not to be long before he was given the chance to redeem himself, for alarming reports now reached Sparta that Tegea was on the point of defection. The Spartans mobilized with unprecedented speed (5.64.1–2),⁴⁵ and, ordering their remaining Arcadian allies to rendezvous with them at Tegea, advanced to Orestheion in Mainalia, probably where Megalopolis was later to be situated.⁴⁶ From there 'the older and the younger' were sent back to guard Sparta, while the rest marched on to Tegea, where shortly afterwards they were joined by their Arcadian allies (5.64.3). They also sent to their other allies, asking them to send troops swiftly to Mantinea, but, in the event, they never came. Meanwhile, the Spartans and the allies already with them had entered Mantineian



Map 7 Mantinea: terrain

territory and began to ravage from a base at a shrine of Herakles (5.64.5), which probably lay southwest of Mantinea itself.

In response, the Mantineians and their allies deployed for battle in what Thucydides describes as ‘a strong position, difficult of approach’ (5.65.1), probably on the lower slopes of Mount Alesion, just east of Mantinea. This would tempt the Spartans, whose expertise was in pitched battle, to attack, but at the same time partly made up for the allies’ relative lack of such expertise by giving them the advantage of the ground. Taking the bait, Agis immediately ordered the advance. But his army had only got within a stone’s throw or javelin range when one of the older men, seeing the strength of the enemy’s position, shouted to the king that he was ‘about to cure wrong with wrong’, meaning, as Thucydides explains (5.65.2), that he was trying to make up for retreating from Argos by a show of untimely eagerness. Agis immediately ordered a retreat,

though Thucydides himself could not decide whether this was because of what the man had shouted or because the king himself had suddenly changed his mind (5.65.3). Nor does he say who the man was, and this surely indicates that he was not one of the advisers, nor a senior officer.⁴⁷

The historian does not appear to have believed that the withdrawal was planned, and nor should we. Everything he tells us about the king suggests that he was a man given to sudden changes of mood.⁴⁸ In particular, the suggestion that he wanted to tempt the allies off their hill will not do. This was clearly the idea behind the plan to flood the plain of Mantinea, and it would be even more difficult to explain why the Spartans were 'surprised' next day to find the enemy drawn up in the plain if Agis had been aiming for this all along. Whereas, as we shall see, the simplest explanation is that they had not expected the enemy to come down until the flooding began to take effect.

The Spartans, then, withdrew to Tegeate territory and began to divert into the plain of Mantinea what Thucydides calls 'the water' (5.65.4), and which he says was a constant source of friction, depending on whose territory it flooded. The intention was to force the Mantineians and their allies to come down off their hill to prevent the diversion of the water, and so bring about a battle on level ground (*loc. cit.*). Probably what the Spartans did was to divert the stream now called Sarandopotamos, which normally flows east from north of Tegea, into the Zanovistas, which flows north into Mantineian territory.⁴⁹

The allies, meanwhile, had been astonished by the Spartans' advance and sudden retreat, and the Argives in particular began to blame their generals for again allowing the Spartans to escape. The generals, too, were bewildered, but, evidently in response to the clamour of their men, led them down from the hill and encamped in the plain, with the intention, Thucydides says, of advancing towards the enemy (5.65.5–6).

Thus, next day, when the Spartans made to return to their old camp at the shrine of Herakles, they found the enemy already formed for battle (5.66.1). Thucydides says, 'they were the most astonished at this moment that they ever remembered being' (5.66.2), and this has caused considerable controversy. We should not be surprised that they had evidently not left pickets on the hills flanking the plain, nor that their advance was not screened by scouts, for this is to credit even the Spartans with a kind of 'professionalism' they probably lacked.⁵⁰ In any case, the enemy should have been in full view for some considerable time as they marched north across the plain. The suggestion that the Mantineians and their allies moved at night also will not do, for the same reason, and it is equally unlikely that the view was obscured by the Pelagos wood which Pausanias says lay in the area (8.11.1). If that had been the reason, Thucydides would have said so, and we should not forget that Pausanias was writing over half a millennium later.

The true explanation is much simpler. First, there is clearly an element of exaggeration in what Thucydides says. For all their surprise, the Spartans were evidently able to deploy without interference, and there was still enough time

for Agis to contemplate changing his order-of-battle. So, although Thucydides says that the Spartans saw the enemy ‘close at hand’ (*di’ oligou*: 5.66.1), they were obviously some distance away, and were not literally ‘taken by surprise’. Their ‘surprise’, then, was not at finding the enemy so close, but at something else. This was surely that the enemy had abandoned their strong position, and were prepared to fight on level ground, long before they had any reason to do so, for the diversion of the water can hardly have had any effect so soon. The Spartans, in short, were surprised by what the enemy had done, not by what they were doing. One can imagine one of them telling Thucydides: ‘There they were, ready for battle – most astonishing thing I ever saw!’⁵¹

Surprised or not, the Spartan army rapidly deployed into line-of-battle, the orders passing smoothly down the chain of command from Agis to the officers in charge of the smallest units, the enomotarchs (5.66.3). The fact that Thucydides remarks upon this suggests that there was no such chain of command in other armies, surprising as this may seem. On the left were the 600 Skiritai, from the hills northwest of Sparta. Thucydides says they always occupied this position, and clearly they counted as hoplites rather than light troops, though they could also act in a skirmishing role (cf., e.g., Xen., *Hell.* 5.4.52–3), and as scouts or pickets (*LP* 12.3 and 13.6). In some ways they resemble the light companies of British regiments in the Napoleonic Wars. Next to them came Brasidas’ ex-helot veterans, the Brasidaeioi, and the *neodamôdeis*, and then, in order, the Spartans, Heraians, Mainalians and Tegeates, with ‘a few’ Spartans on the far right. Both wings were flanked by cavalry, presumably Spartan (5.67.1).

On the other side, the Mantineians were on the right since the battle was to be fought in their territory, with next to them their Arcadian allies. Then came what Thucydides calls ‘the 1,000 picked Argives, to whom the state gave a long military training at the public expense’ (5.67.2). Again this may seem odd to modern readers, accustomed to all troops’ being trained ‘at the public expense’. But, apart from the training given at Sparta, for which Thucydides has Perikles use the same word – *askêsis* – as he uses here (2.39.1), there is no evidence that any other Greek troops were trained at this date. Next to the ‘picked’ Argives, came the rest of the Argives, with their allies from Kleonai and Orneai alongside them, and finally, on the left wing, the Athenians, flanked by their own cavalry (5.67.2). Since Thucydides says nothing about cavalry on the right of the allied line, we are left to assume there was none.

Having given the dispositions of the two armies, Thucydides next tries to give numbers. He says the Spartan army ‘appeared bigger’ (*meizon ephanê*: 5.68.1), and although he complains that it was difficult to give exact figures (5.68.2), he then proceeds to give a fairly precise estimate of its numbers, apart from the Skiritai on the left and the ‘few’ on the right, by multiplying its average depth (eight) by the number of men in the front rank (448). Thus he reckoned that there were about 3,584 men in the other Spartan units. But there is a problem here. As we have seen, he says the Spartan army ‘appeared bigger’ (5.68.1), and later he says ‘they had the bigger army’ (*meizon to strateuma eichon*: 5.71.2). But, although he

does not give numbers for the other contingents, it is difficult to bring the total even to as many as 8,000, even adding the 300 *Hippeis* he mentions later (5.72.4), and the enemy can hardly have had fewer than that.

Thucydides himself gives only one figure for them, the 1,000 picked Argives, but he later implies that the entire Argive army was present, apart from a few homeguards (5.75.4), and a plausible guess would be that what he describes as ‘the so-called five *lochoi*’, which made up the rest of the Argive contingent (5.72.4), each contained 1,000 hoplites, like the unit of picked men, making 6,000 Argives in all; at the Nemea, twenty-four years later, there were said to be ‘about 7,000’ (Xen., *Hell.* 4.2.17). Diodoros, as we have seen, says the Mantineians had sent ‘not many fewer’ than 3,000 hoplites to the aid of the Argives earlier in the year (12.78.4), and there is no reason to doubt that they could field as many or more for a battle in their own territory. Then there were almost certainly 1,000 Athenians (cf. 5.61.1), and we can hardly allow fewer than about 500 for the Mantineians’ Arcadian allies and those from Kleonai and Orneai. In short, the allied army was probably about 11,000 strong.

Various solutions have been propounded and none is entirely satisfactory, but the most plausible is that Thucydides somehow contrived to halve the Spartan main body.⁵² As we have seen (above, p. 71), there is some reason to believe that there were already twelve *lochoi* in the Spartan army, whereas Thucydides implies there were only six at Mantineia, though the Spartans were ‘in full force’ (*pandêmei*: 5.64.2).⁵³ If the Spartan army, apart from the Arcadians and the ‘few’ Spartans on the right, came to just over 8,000 men, not under 4,500, as Thucydides implies, we would then only have to suppose that the Arcadians and the ‘few’ Spartans came to more than 3,000, which is quite plausible, to have an army larger than the likely size of the enemy army. It would not have been much larger, but even, say, 800 more hoplites would have given it an overlap of about 100 shields, and this would have been enough.

It has been suggested that the deployment of the allied army reveals careful planning, whereas that of the Spartan army is evidence only of confusion,⁵⁴ but this is very unlikely. The normal assumption in hoplite battles seems to have been that one would win on the right, if at all (cf. 5.71.1), but here the placing of the Mantineians on the right was not because they were the best allied troops. According to Thucydides (5.67.2), it was simply because the battle was fought in their territory, and it was natural to place their Arcadian allies next to them. If the intention had really been to exploit the advantage the right usually enjoyed, the 1,000 picked Argives would have been placed there, with the rest of the Argives alongside them. Similarly, the Athenians will have been placed on the left because they were the only contingent that had any cavalry and this had to go on a wing, not because the allies were planning some kind of holding operation on that wing.

The Spartan order-of-battle may also have been largely dictated by convention. Thus the Skiritai were placed on the left, according to Thucydides (5.67.1), because they always occupied that position, and it may have seemed appropriate

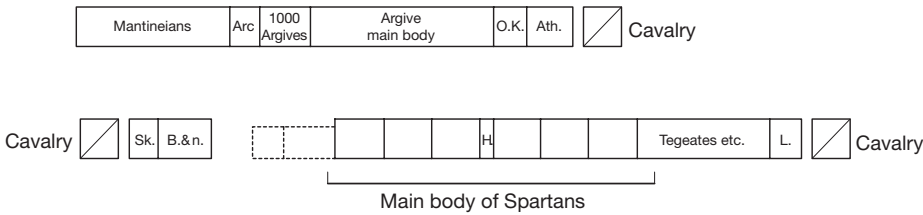
to put the Brasideioi and *neodamôdeis* next to them. Then the Tegeates may have been placed on the right because, although the battle was not literally fought in their territory, their territory adjoined that of Mantinea. This meant that the Spartans had to occupy the centre. The only oddity is the placing of the ‘few’ Spartans on the extreme right. This suggests that the right was thought too important to entrust to the Tegeates on their own. Possibly the Spartans had realized that they had more men than the enemy, and in any case anticipated the usual drift to the right on which Thucydides remarks (5.71.1). If so, they may have wanted to control what happened there.⁵⁵

Before the advance began, the various allied contingents were given appropriate harangues by their generals. The Mantineians were reminded that the battle was taking place in their territory, the Argives that they were fighting for the hegemony of the Peloponnese, the Athenians that a victory in the Peloponnese alongside such allies would effectively make them safe from future Spartan aggression (5.69.1). But Thucydides implies the Spartans needed no such encouragement. They roused one another’s spirits with their war-songs and a reminder of what they knew well – that ‘long-continued practice in action was a better safeguard than any hurried verbal exhortation, however well delivered’ (5.69.2). Thucydides also makes the point that whereas the Argives and their allies came on ‘excitedly and with passion’ (5.70), the Spartans advanced ‘slowly and to the sound of many pipers’ – not, he explains, for any religious reason, but ‘so that marching evenly [*homalôs*: in step?] to the rhythm, they could move forward without their formation being broken, as is wont to happen to large armies as they approach’.

But King Agis was not happy. As Thucydides explains, all armies tended to edge to the right as each man sought the protection of the shield of the man to his right, and the man on the extreme right tried to avoid exposing his shieldless side to the enemy (5.71.1). So here, the Mantineians were beginning to outflank the Spartan left, and although the Spartans were extending even further beyond the enemy left, ‘insofar as they had the larger army’ (5.71.2), Agis was worried about his own left. To counter the overlap there, he ordered the Skiritai and Brasideioi – presumably the *neodamodeis*, too, though Thucydides does not say so – to shift to their left until they covered the Mantineians, and two of the polemarchs to plug the resulting gap with two *lochoi* from the right. He thought, Thucydides says (5.71.3), that he would still have a superiority on his right, but could also restore the position on his left. Although, as it turned out, the redeployment was never carried out, if Thucydides has accurately reported Agis’ intentions, they confirm that there were more than six *lochoi* in the Spartan line. Even Agis can hardly have contemplated shifting a third of his Spartan troops from right to left as they advanced on the enemy, whereas, if he had twelve *lochoi*, he was only thinking of shifting a sixth.⁵⁶

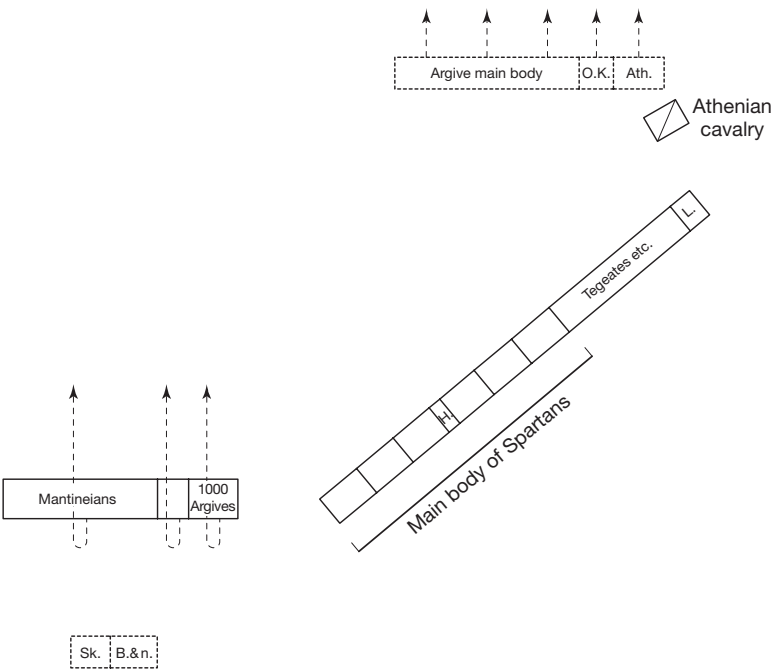
The reason why the redeployment was not implemented was that the two polemarchs refused to obey the king’s order, because it was issued at such short notice, as the advance began. For this, they were later exiled, but for cowardice

MANTINEIA: Spartan manoeuvres – first stage



- Key:
- Arc = Mantinea's Arcadian allies
 - O.K. = Orneatai and Kleonaiaans
 - Ath. = Athenians
 - Sk. = Skiritai
 - B. & n. = Brasidaeioi & neodamodeis
 - H. = Hippeis
 - L. = 'few' Lakedaimonians

MANTINEIA: Spartan manoeuvres – second stage



Map 8 Mantinea: Spartan manoeuvres

rather than insubordination (5.72.1). The latter, curiously enough, does not appear to have been regarded as a crime in Sparta, whereas ‘cowardice’ was one of the commonest charges.⁵⁷ But whether the polemarchs were right or wrong, the Spartan line was left in a potentially disastrous situation. When Agis realized that the two *lochoi* were not coming, he ordered the Skiritai, Brasideioi and again, presumably, the *neodamôdeis*, to close up again to their right, but they were unable to do so before the enemy was upon them, and thus a yawning gap was left in the Spartan line. Thucydides remarks that the Spartans had had the worst of it in ‘skill’ (*empeiriai*: 5.72.2), but that they now showed they were not inferior in courage, and presumably he means that although they had been outmanoeuvred, they had the confidence to ride it out, where other armies might have broken.⁵⁸ As it was, the Mantineian right turned the Skiritai, Brasideioi and *neodamodeis*, and their discomfiture was complete when the Mantineian left, their Arcadian allies and the 1,000 picked Argives swept into the gap. As a result, the Spartan left wing fled and was pursued back to the wagons in the rear, where some of the older men left on guard were killed.

But elsewhere in the field, and particularly in the centre where Agis and the 300 *Hippeis* (‘Knights’) fought, most of the enemy fled before they even came ‘to grips’ (*es cheiras*: 5.72.4), including some of the Athenians. The rest of the latter, their right broken and their left outflanked by the Tegeates and the ‘few’ Spartans, could only retreat. But at least they did so in good order, partly thanks to the cover provided by their cavalry (5.73.2), but partly to the first sensible decision Agis made. Realizing that his left wing was in trouble, he ordered the rest of his army to go to its aid. It did this by pivoting to its left across the front of the defeated part of the enemy army, as it retreated. This meant that the surviving Athenians and Argives could now escape safely, but it was a different case with the Mantineians and their allies and the 1,000 picked Argives. Realizing that the rest of their army was in retreat and that the Spartans were threatening their own escape, they came streaming back across the battlefield, exposing their shieldless sides to the wheeling Spartans, and though most of the Argives got away, the Mantineians lost heavily (5.73.3).

Thucydides does not explain why this was so, and some have accepted Diodoros’ story (12.79.6) that Agis let the Argives go, on the orders of Pharax, one of his advisers.⁵⁹ But Diodoros’ whole account of the battle (12.79.4–7) is riddled with typically rhetorical flourishes, and this story can hardly stand against Thucydides’ silence. Even the notion that Agis had to accept Pharax’s ‘advice’ in a matter like this is belied by what Thucydides tells us about the advisers’ authority. There are simpler, purely military reasons why the Argives may have escaped relatively unscathed. They were, as Thucydides tells us, a highly trained unit, and if they kept their discipline, this alone might explain their preservation.⁶⁰ They may also, being more under control and in any case nearer the point of danger, have seen what was happening before the Mantineians, and so got away before the Spartans completed their wheel.

Nor should too much be made of Thucydides' statement that the Spartans did not normally pursue for any length of time (5.73.4), for this was true of all hoplites. Apart from any question of exhaustion due to their heavy equipment, particularly their shields, which fleeing hoplites often discarded, they were very conscious of the necessity to maintain an unbroken shield-wall. They knew they were much more vulnerable if they broke ranks either to flee or to pursue.

In any case, the rout of the allied army was complete, and, as was usually the case, for reasons suggested above, it lost far more heavily than the Spartans: 700 Argives, Orneates and Kleonaian, 200 Mantineians, and 200 Athenians and Aiginetans, with both their generals, against 300 on the Spartan side, presumably mainly Skiritai, Brasidaeioi and *neodamôdeis*, and too few of their allies 'to be worth mentioning' (5.74.3).

As we have seen, Thucydides was critical of the skill displayed by the Spartans in this battle, but it is clear that it was not just their courage that won the day. The Mantineians and even the 'picked' Argives completely failed to exploit their success and simply went haring off in pursuit of the broken Spartan left and to plunder the Spartan baggage-train. But the Spartans and their Arcadian allies, perhaps influenced by the 'few' Spartans on their right, were always under control, and were able to exploit the flight of the enemy centre and the withdrawal of the enemy left.

For all its completeness, however, at first it seemed as if the Spartan victory would have little significance. The allies were soon reinforced by 3,000 Eleians and another 1,000 Athenians, and although they did not seek another confrontation, they possibly deterred the Spartans from making any attempt on Mantinea. Indeed, they were evidently confident enough to carry on the war by investing Epidaurus, and the Athenians, in particular, walled off the promontory jutting northwards from the city to serve as a base for a permanent force when most of the besiegers dispersed for the winter (5.75.5–6). The Epidaurians had taken advantage of the absence of most of the Argive army to invade Argive territory on the day before the battle (5.75.4), and the allied attack on Epidaurus was no doubt partly in response to this. But it had also long been part of Athenian and Argive strategy to try to win Epidaurus over and so ease communications between them (5.53).

But that Sparta confidence had also been restored was shown by the fact that reinforcements under King Pleistoanax, which had reached Tegea, returned home on news of the battle, and that word was sent to Corinth and elsewhere to say that help was no longer required. The victorious army, too, returned home, dismissing the allied troops, and the Spartans settled down to celebrate the Karneia (5.75.1–2). As Thucydides remarks (5.75.3), the victory had wiped out the disgrace of Sphakteria and dispelled any notion that the Spartans had gone soft: 'they might seem to have been worsted by fortune, but in spirit they were still the same'.

Nor was it long before the victory had more tangible effects. At the beginning of November, they again mobilized and advanced as far as Tegea, as though to

threaten another invasion of Argive territory. Instead, however, they sent proposals for peace, borne by their Argive *proxenos*. It is at this point that Thucydides makes his first reference to Argives sympathetic to them who wished to overthrow the Argive democratic system, and although he says that such people had existed for some time, this does not mean that they had been influential enough to sway Argive policy before this, in particular at the time of the four-month truce. In fact, even now Thucydides says they first hoped to negotiate a peace and alliance with the Spartans, then attack the democracy, and this suggests their position was still relatively weak. It was probably the Spartan victory at Mantinea which finally swung public opinion in their favour, and this only after much counter-argument, in which Alkibiades, once again representing Athenian interests, played a part (5.76.3).

The result was first a peace and then an alliance for fifty years, both recorded in the original Doric by Thucydides (5.77 and 79). The former, in particular, required the Argives to hand over the various Arcadian hostages they held, and to evacuate Epidaurian territory, demolishing the fortification there. What is more, it laid down that if the Athenians objected, they were to be considered enemies of both the Argives and the Spartans (5.77.1–2). The alliance was apparently preceded by a formal renunciation by the Argives of their alliance with the Mantineians, Athenians and Eleians (5.78). For the time being, however, although the Argives and Spartans concerted their foreign policy, there was still no move to overthrow the Argive democratic system. Instead, the two peoples agreed not to have any dealings with the Athenians unless they abandoned their bases in the Peloponnese, and they also took steps to strengthen ties with both Perdikkas of Macedonia and the Greek cities of Thrace. In particular, the Argives demanded that the Athenians evacuate their new fort at Epidauros, and although the Athenians responded first by tricking the other contingents into withdrawing, they later negotiated the handover of the fort with the Epidaurians themselves (5.80).

The Mantineians also reached an accommodation with the Spartans at about this time (5.81.1), but although it has been argued that Eleians, too, rejoined the Spartan alliance, this is by no means necessarily the case. They are notably absent from the list of states from which the Spartans ordered triremes in 412 (8.3.2), and Xenophon's account of the outbreak of hostilities between them and the Spartans in 402 (Xen., *Hell.* 3.2.21) rather implies that they were still independent.⁶¹ Lepreon, too, was still then in Eleian hands (*ibid.*, 3.2.25).

The first move against the Argive democracy came only after the Spartans had taken steps to install an oligarchy, or perhaps a narrower oligarchy, at Sikyon (5.81.2). A force of 1,000 Argives which Thucydides implies had been sent to join a Spartan force of the same size, but which had apparently taken no part in the Sikyon episode, now certainly joined the Spartans in overthrowing the democratic regime in Argos, probably late in February or early in March 417 (5.81.2). It has inevitably been assumed that these 1,000 Argives are to be identified with the 1,000 'picked' Argives at Mantinea. But although Diodoros

does so (12.79.4–80.3), Thucydides does not, and he also says nothing of the massacre of democratic leaders at Argos which Diodoros records (12.80.3).⁶²

All this is poor evidence for the view that the Argive oligarchs had been able to exert an influence as far back as the time of the truce almost a year earlier, and the comparatively short period of time their regime lasted shows how essentially weak they were. Diodoros (12.80.3) claims it lasted eight months, but although this might just possibly be true, counting inclusively as the Greeks did, Thucydides says it was overthrown about the time of the Gymnopaidiai in Sparta, and it is difficult to put this festival as late as September, let alone October.⁶³ It is more likely, then, that the oligarchy lasted a bare six months. Clearly the situation was similar to the one in Athens at the time of the revolution of the Four Hundred, in 411. The majority of Argives were firmly committed to democracy. It was only a temporary loss of nerve following the battle of Mantinea, particularly, perhaps, among the general mass of hoplites, that let in the oligarchs. As Thucydides says, when the democrats ‘took heart’ (*anatharsêsas*: 5.80.2), there was very soon a counter-revolution.

The democrats deliberately chose the time of the Gymnopaidiai, probably in July or August 417, because they thought the Spartans would be concentrating on the festivities. The oligarchs evidently got wind of the plot, since Thucydides says they appealed to Sparta for help, but for some time the Spartans paid no heed. When, in the end, they even postponed the festival, it was too late. They had got no further than Tegea when they heard that the oligarchs had been defeated, and despite the appeals of those who had survived the fighting in the city, they went home to celebrate their festival (5.82.2–3).

Shortly afterwards, representatives from both the new regime in Argos and from the exiles arrived in Sparta; the former, presumably, seeking to maintain the peace and alliance, the others appealing for restoration.⁶⁴ But, although the Spartans naturally favoured the oligarchic exiles and promised help, they constantly procrastinated (5.82.4). This has led to the usual speculation about different factions among the Spartans,⁶⁵ but, although there is no reason to doubt that there were differences of opinion, military considerations are again enough to explain the Spartan attitude. Argos was clearly a walled city by this time, since otherwise it would have been pointless to build ‘long walls’ down to the sea, as its people did later this summer (5.82.5–6), and the Spartans could not hope to take it except by a lengthy siege. All they could realistically hope to do was defeat the Argives in the field and wait for this to bring about a change of regime. This had happened after Mantinea, but it was now clear that the Argive democracy was too deeply rooted to be lastingly overthrown, and there was really nothing more that the Spartans could do.

That this is the correct interpretation is suggested by what happened next. Having failed to placate the Spartans, the Argive democrats naturally began to think of reviving their friendly relations with the Athenians, but now they took steps to make sure that they could maintain contact by constructing the long walls. The idea, Thucydides says (5.82.5), was that even if they were blockaded

by land, they could import what they needed. Plutarch (*Alk.* 15.4–5) says the plan was suggested by Alkibiades, and this may be true, though his source may have guessed that Alkibiades was responsible because of his involvement with the similar project at Patrai two years earlier (5.52.2). However, builders and stone-masons certainly came from Athens to help after the task had been enthusiastically begun by the entire population of Argos (5.82.6).

But such a project could not be kept secret indefinitely, and in any case, Thucydides tells us (5.83.1), there were still people in Argos sympathetic to the Spartan cause. The Spartans obviously realized that if they allowed the walls to be completed, they would no longer be able to exert as much pressure on the Argives as they had previously done, so they marched on the city in strength and were joined by all their allies except the Corinthians (5.83.1). The latter also took no part in the campaign against the Argives a year later (6.7.1), and it has been suggested that they were reluctant to see an oligarchic Argos become a tame satellite of the Spartans, because this would diminish their own influence with the latter.⁶⁶

Even without the Corinthians, the Spartans succeeded in destroying the sections of wall the Argives had already built, though the promised help from their Argive sympathizers failed to materialize. They also took the town of Hysiai in Argive territory and massacred all its free and, presumably, male inhabitants; the rest will have been sold (5.83.2). This atrocity was, on the whole, out of character, and one wonders whether memories of their defeat at Hysiai over 250 years earlier (cf. Pausanias 2.24.8) had something to do with it. In any case, the Argives were evidently not too discouraged, because after the Spartans and their allies had departed, they themselves went out and ravaged the territory of Phleious, where most of the oligarchic exiles had settled (5.83.3).

We know from a fragmentary inscription (*IG* i³ 86) that a treaty between the Argives and the Athenians was formally concluded in the spring of 416,⁶⁷ and at about the same time Alkibiades, presumably as *stratēgos*, as Diodoros says (12.82.1), led a squadron of twenty ships to Argos. There he arrested 300 of those suspected of being Spartan sympathizers, and the Athenians interned them on nearby islands under their control. Probably early in 415, the Athenians also helped the Argives to destroy Orneai, where Argive exiles had been settled by the Spartans (6.7).⁶⁸

The main Athenian operation of 416, however, was the notorious attack on Melos, the context for the so-called ‘Melian dialogue’, a long digression in Thucydides which purports to record a discussion between representatives of the Athenian commanders and the Melian authorities (5.85–113).⁶⁹ In the context of the war as a whole, the episode was unimportant, and, indeed, it is not easy to see why the Athenians should have chosen to attack Melos at this time. As we have seen (above, p. 59), there is slight evidence that the Melians had earlier contributed to the Spartan war-effort, and they had withstood an Athenian attack in 426 (3.91.2–3). In 425 they had been assessed for tribute (ML 69=Fornara 136), but what Thucydides says about the reasons for the attack in 416 suggests

that none had ever been paid.⁷⁰ Thucydides, in fact, uses almost the same phrase here as he does to explain the previous attack (3.91.2; cf. 5.84.2), saying that the Melians were unwilling to submit to the Athenians like the other islanders. But this does not really explain why the Athenians chose to attack now. Perhaps, baulked in both the Peloponnese and in the north (see below, p. 135), they wanted to demonstrate that they were still supreme at sea.

But if they had expected an easy victory, they were disappointed. The siege dragged on until after the end of the campaigning season, and twice the besieged managed to capture parts of the siege-works, once by a night attack, the second time because a section was badly guarded (5.115.4 and 116.2). After the second *débâcle*, the Athenians sent reinforcements and pressed the siege more vigorously, but even then their eventual success was partly due to treachery. These setbacks may explain, though they cannot excuse, the savage fate meted out to the gallant islanders – the execution of all adult males and the enslavement of the women and children.⁷¹

By now Greece was clearly slipping back into full-scale war. A second Argive attack on Phleious, during which they were ambushed by the Phleians and their own exiles and lost some eighty men (5.115.1), might not mean much, but it was a different matter when the Athenians recommenced their raids from Pylos. Even then, Thucydides says, the Spartans did not abandon the peace and go to war. But they did issue a proclamation allowing any of their allies who wished to plunder the Athenians, and although the rest of the Peloponnesians refrained, the Corinthians took advantage, for private reasons (5.113.3).

But before full-scale war finally broke out again in Greece and the Aegean, there occurred perhaps the most famous and most puzzling episode in the entire war. Thucydides' account of the end of Melos is followed immediately, and surely not fortuitously, by the words 'in that same winter the Athenians resolved to sail again to Sicily, with a greater force than that with Laches and Eurymedon, and to conquer it if they could' (6.1.1).

SICILIAN ADVENTURE

Ostensibly the expeditionary force the Athenians sent to Sicily in 415 was their response to an appeal from the people of Egesta, who had gone to war with those of neighbouring Selinous (now Selinunte), and were being hard pressed by them and their allies, the Syracusans. The Egestaian envoys were probably accompanied by ones from Leontinoi in eastern Sicily, though these may not actually have addressed the Athenian assembly, as Diodoros claims (12.83.2). In Thucydides' account, the Egestaians speak on behalf of the people of Leontinoi, reminding the Athenians of the alliance between them and the Leontinines 'in the time of Laches and the former war' (i.e. 427: 6.6.2).¹

Since the peace concluded at Gela in 424, the Leontinines had been having a hard time. Shortly after the departure of their Athenian allies, there had been civil strife which had led to the expulsion of most of the population, the emigration to Syracuse of the upper classes, and the consequent desertion of the city (5.4.1–3). According to Diodoros (12.54.7), the Syracusans had then turned Leontinoi into a Syracusan outpost. Some time later, however, some of the Leontinines in Syracuse had become dissatisfied with their situation and had returned to Leontinoi, where they had occupied a part of the city and a nearby fort. This had induced many of the lower classes to return, and the two groups had joined in a war of independence (5.4.4). Hearing of this, the Athenians had sent envoys to Sicily to try to persuade their former allies and the other Sikeliots to join in resisting the power of Syracuse and so saving Leontinoi. They had had some success at Kamarina and Akragas (Agrigento), but, having failed at Gela, had returned home after doing what they could to encourage the Leontinines. On their way out and back they had also approached some of the Greek cities of Italy, and had persuaded the people of Lokroi (Locri) to make peace with the Athenians (5.4.1 and 5–6, 5.5).

Awareness of Athenian interest in Leontinoi may explain why the Egestaian envoys referred to the alliance between them, but it is odd that they apparently did not mention their own alliance with the Athenians. This may be because it was an old one, if it was really concluded in the 450s,² or because they were embarrassed by their failure to help the Athenians in their previous operations in Sicily. The main point they made was that if the Syracusans were allowed to

win control of Sicily, they might come to the aid of their Dorian kinsmen in the Peloponnese. They also offered concrete inducement in the form of a promise of sufficient funds to finance the war (6.6.2). After several assemblies, the Athenians voted to send envoys to Egesta to see if its people really had the funds and how their war with the Selinountines was progressing.

The envoys returned in spring 415 with the Egestaian representatives. They brought with them sixty talents of uncoined silver, a month's pay for the crews of the sixty ships they intended to ask the Athenians to send (6.8.1), and the latter then held another assembly to hear what these representatives and their own envoys had to say. According to Thucydides (6.8.2), what was said was 'encouraging, but untrue', particularly on the question of funds, and later he explains how the Athenian envoys had been duped. They had been taken to the temple of Aphrodite at Eryx and shown an array of silver dedications, and the Egestaians had also gathered all the gold and silver cups in Egesta itself and elsewhere in the neighbourhood, and entertained the Athenians at a series of dinner parties at which the same plate was used each time (6.46.3). As a result, they returned home with glowing reports of the wealth of Egesta.³ Unaware of the trick at the time, the assembly enthusiastically voted to send sixty ships, under Alkibiades, Nikias and Lamachos, with full powers to help Egesta, re-establish Leontinoi if possible, and 'take what other actions in Sicily they might think best for the Athenians' (6.8.2).⁴

Four days after this first assembly, however, a second was held to finalize arrangements, and Nikias seized the opportunity to reopen the whole question. Thucydides says (6.8.3–4) he was unwilling to be one of the commanders, thinking the whole idea a mistake, and he sets out his objections in a speech (6.9–14). But after a response from Alkibiades (6.16–18), and further pleas from the Egestaians and Leontinines, he says the Athenians were even more enthusiastic for the project (6.19). Nikias then changed tack, and tried to dampen their enthusiasm by putting requirements unacceptably high (6.20–3). But this backfired, and eventually someone challenged him to say exactly what he thought was needed. After he had reluctantly done so, the three commanders were voted full powers to decide what forces they wanted (8.25–6).⁵

Of the other pieces of evidence, the most interesting are some fragmentary inscriptions (ML 78=Fornara 146) which may refer to the expedition.⁶ Two of the fragments (b and c) seem to relate to the first of Thucydides' assemblies since the number of ships is still sixty, and the first requires the assembly to decide whether to appoint one general or more (lines 2–3). But Plutarch's statement (*Nik.* 12.3; cf. 15.1 and 3; *Alk.* 18.1) that Nikias was elected first and then Alkibiades and Lamachos, with the implication that Nikias was somehow the senior, is belied by what Thucydides implies about their relationship.⁷

There are two interrelated questions here. Was the original intention behind the expedition the limited one of helping Egesta and Leontinoi, or was Thucydides right to see this as merely the ostensible intention, 'the real reason' (*iêi alêthestatêi prophasei*: 6.6.1, cf. 1.23.6, above pp. 16–17) being a desire to

conquer all Sicily (cf. 6.1.1 and 8.4), and perhaps more (cf. 6.15.2 and 7.90.2)? Second, did the expedition have a serious military purpose, or were the motives simply ambition on the part of those who advocated it and greed on that of those who voted for it?

As far as wider ambitions are concerned, it seems likely that Thucydides is wrong, at least as to the original intentions. In fact, the Athenians seem to have been notably cautious, first sending envoys to see what the situation was, then voting for forces no larger than those that had eventually operated in Sicily in the 420s. The only hint of wider aims is the additional instruction to the commanders to 'take what other actions in Sicily they might think best for the Athenians' (6.8.2), which may reflect the original decree.⁸ But, even if it does, it may mean no more than that they were given a free hand to conclude alliances, for example, in order to further their operations.

Thucydides' view that from the first the intention was to conquer Sicily may be based on the knowledge that many Athenians had long had ambitions to extend the empire to the west. He makes similar claims for the operations in the 420s (cf. 3.86.4 and 4.65.3), in the latter passage using the same word for 'conquer' (*katastrepsasthai*) as he does for the alleged intention in 415 (6.1.1). He may also have been influenced by the increase in forces which resulted from Nikias' intervention, and the widespread enthusiasm for the expedition which emerged (6.24). There is certainly no reason to doubt that, at least by the time the expedition sailed, there was an element of mass hysteria in Athens (cf. Plut., *Nik.* 12.1 and *Alk.* 17.3). Nor need we doubt that there was widespread ignorance of Sicily, despite thousands of Athenians having served there in the 420s. More recent conflicts suggest that service overseas is not necessarily a corrective to ignorance of other places and peoples.⁹

Alternatively, Thucydides may have based his opinion on knowledge of what Alkibiades claimed were the objects of the expedition when he fled to Sparta (6.90). By then, however, it was in Alkibiades' interest to exaggerate Athenian intentions in order to impress his no-doubt suspicious hosts with his importance, and he may himself have had such wide-ranging ambitions, though, if so, he concealed them from the Athenians, if Thucydides reproduces at all accurately what he said to them (6.16–18). There the only hint of more grandiose intentions is the claim that gains in Sicily were likely to lead to Athens becoming the leading power in Greece, but even this is immediately tempered by the cautious words 'or we will harm the Syracusans and thus benefit both ourselves and our allies' (6.18.4).

But even if the original aim of the expedition was limited, was it a serious, military one, or were the Athenians thinking of other things? Thucydides hints here and there at the notion of a pre-emptive strike to prevent the Sicilian Greeks from aiding the Peloponnesians (cf. 6.6.2 and 10.4). But Nikias argues that the Sicilians were not a danger to Athens, and, more dubiously, that they would be even less of a danger if ruled by the Syracusans (6.11.2–3). The only concession he makes to the idea of a pre-emptive strike is when he says that if the Athenians

really wanted to frighten the Sicilians, the best way would be to make a demonstration of their power and not risk disaster by serious operations (6.11.4). This is also the strategy he advocates later (6.47).

Alkibiades also argues that the point of an alliance with the Egestaians was not so that they could aid the Athenians, but that they might prevent the Athenians' enemies in Sicily from attacking them by being a nuisance to them (6.18.1). But he goes further, arguing that one should not just wait to be attacked, but try to forestall it (6.18.2). The dynamics of empire required further conquest, and not only would sending forces to Sicily in itself be a blow to Peloponnesian assumptions, but success there would lead to triumph in Greece (6.18.4).

But how much of a danger were the Sicilians to the Athenians, or, conversely, how much of a help could they have been? We cannot really answer such questions, if only because we cannot know whether, if left alone, the Sicilians would have fallen under Syracusan control, or whether, if so, they would have joined the Peloponnesians, as the Egestaians warned (6.6.2), or remained aloof, as Nikias argued (6.11.2–3). But the Kerkyraians certainly used the argument that the position of their island on the route to and from the west could prevent naval forces going in either direction, as an inducement to the Athenians to accept them as allies (1.36.2), and Thucydides says this was a consideration that influenced the Athenians (1.44.3). The Spartans, too, are said to have ordered the building of ships in the west at the beginning of the war (2.7.2).

It is true that the help Sparta and her allies eventually received from the west did not amount to much. Thucydides mentions only twenty ships from Syracuse, two from Selinous (8.26.1), and ten from Thouria (8.35.1). Xenophon implies that the original 20 Syracusan ships, after being replaced after the battle of Kyzikos, were later joined by five more (*Hell.* 1.1.18, 25–6 and 1.2.8). But the fewness of these numbers does not rule out the idea of a pre-emptive strike. The Athenians may have believed that the threat from the west was more serious than it was. Diodoros actually records the building of 100 triremes at Syracuse in 439/8 (12.30.1), and though this is belied by the ease with which 20 Athenian ships operated in Sicilian waters between 427 and 425, the Syracusans had at least 80 ships by 413 (7.22.1; cf. 37.3).

Such considerations are also relevant to the question how much of a help the Sicilians might have been to the Athenians had the expedition been a success, but one doubts whether it would have made much difference in a positive sense. Even if Athenian sea power had been increased by, say, fifty ships from the west, it would still have been impossible to blockade the Peloponnese, as Alkibiades allegedly claimed (6.90.3), and even if it had been possible, it would hardly have been decisive. The Athenians needed land forces for victory, and despite Alkibiades' even more extravagant claims about these (*loc. cit.*), one doubts whether the Athenians would have been able to get from the west troops in sufficient quantity or quality to defeat the Spartans and their allies. Alkibiades himself poured scorn on Sicilian soldiers in another context (6.17.3 and 5), and troops who were frightened of thunderstorms (cf. 6.70.1) were hardly likely to impress Spartan hoplites.

The most that one can say is that if the Athenians had been successful in Sicily, their defeat would almost certainly have been delayed, and perhaps another peace patched up, constituting 'victory' of a sort. But was it worth the risk? Surely not. As Nikias pointed out (6.10.1–3), the situation in Greece was extremely volatile, even if the Spartans themselves were still refraining from directly hostile acts, and to divide Athens' forces might invite attack from them in conjunction with now-provoked Sicilians. In the context of the war as a whole, there can be little doubt that the expedition to Sicily was an act of folly.

Nikias' alternative was to secure the empire the Athenians already had before trying to extend it, and, above all, to recover control in Thrace (6.10.5). There the situation had, if anything, worsened since the peace. Though Skione had been reduced, Thyssos had been taken by Dion in 421 (5.35.1), and in 417 Dion itself had revolted (5.82.1). Perdikkas of Makedonia was also now hostile, as Nikias knew to his cost. At one point he had been given command of an expeditionary force destined for Thrace, and, in particular, for Amphipolis, but the plan had had to be abandoned because of Perdikkas' attitude (5.83.4), though there is epigraphic evidence that Athenian forces were operating in the north in both 418/17 and 417/16 (ML 77=Fornara 144). Ironically, even Kleon might have agreed with Nikias that Thrace should have priority in 415.

The only risk was that the Spartans would react to an Athenian attack on the Thracian rebels since they and their allies had an alliance with some of them (5.80.2). But this risk was far outweighed by the dangers of sending forces to Sicily. If the Spartans did threaten reprisals, forces sent to Thrace could be rapidly recalled, whereas it would take months to get a Sicilian expedition safely home. Alkibiades had allegedly argued that the Athenians had gambled with a similar division of forces in the 450s, but he had carefully omitted to mention what had happened in Egypt in 454, when 250 Athenian and allied ships had been lost (1.104 and 109–10). The one valid point he made was that no amount of ships could stop the Spartans and their allies invading Attica (6.17.6). But if full-scale war was to break out again in mainland Greece, it was surely better to have an additional 60 ships in home waters, let alone the 134 that were eventually sent to Sicily, rather than hundreds of miles from home.

It also seems to have been Thucydides' final, considered judgement that the expedition was a mistake. In a typically enigmatic passage (2.65.11), which most commentators agree was one of the latest he wrote, he says that one of the many mistakes the Athenians made was 'the expedition to Sicily', though he goes on to claim that the error lay not so much in underestimating their opponents as in those at home taking decisions against the expeditionary forces' interests, presumably referring, above all, to the recall of Alkibiades.¹⁰

This ultimately resulted from an extraordinary incident that took place before the expedition sailed: the desecration of the stone images of Hermes that stood in many parts of Athens (6.27.1–2).¹¹ This was not only regarded as a bad omen but also as evidence of a plot to overthrow the democracy (6.27.3), and although Alkibiades was not implicated, information was also laid about mock celebrations

of the Mysteries in private houses, and he was one of those accused. This was taken up by his political enemies (6.28), but they were unwilling to allow him to be tried at once, in case the immense popularity of the expedition with the forces and people in general should secure his acquittal. Instead, they hoped to recall him to stand trial after the expedition had departed, and so, in the end, he was allowed to go.¹²

The most plausible explanation for the mutilation of the herms is that it was the work of people who wanted the expedition to be cancelled. There were certainly people in Athens who would have been glad to see this happen, including Nikias and his supporters, though it is unlikely that Nikias himself would have stooped so low, in view of his well-known piety (cf. 7.50.4 and 86.5). The fourth-century historian Kratippos (*FGH* 64F3) and the later Philochoros (*FGH* 328F133) say the Corinthians were responsible, and although Plutarch (*Alk.* 18.3–4) claims this idea was rejected at the time, it is possible that they were working with those opposed to the expedition at Athens.

The involvement of Alkibiades, who clearly had nothing to do with the original incident, can equally plausibly be explained as the work of his enemies, as Thucydides implies (6.28.2), and this probably also explains why the various impieties were thought to point to some kind of anti-democratic conspiracy (6.27.3, 60.1 and 4 and 61.1). The real conspirators might have wished to create an atmosphere of alarm and suspicion, but accusations of plotting against the democracy are just as likely to have been made by Alkibiades' enemies to create prejudice against him.

It was against this ominous background that the expedition finally sailed, probably in June. Thucydides paints a vivid picture of both the tensions and the splendour of the scene (6.30–2), though one cannot help but feel that this was partly, at least, coloured by his knowledge that few of those who set out ever came home. The first stage was to Kerkyra, where the Athenians joined their allies' ships, supply vessels and other craft, and a general review was held (6.30.1). The whole force was then split into three divisions to make it easier to find water, food and anchorages, and three ships were sent ahead to find out which western states were prepared to receive them (6.42). There were now 134 triremes in all, of which 100 were Athenian, the rest from Chios and other allies. Sixty of the Athenian triremes were 'fast' (*tacheiai*), the rest 'transports' (*stratiôtides*: 6.43). The latter probably differed structurally to some extent, and were rowed by the soldiers they carried, supervised by a skeleton crew of sailors. But it is almost certain that they could be used as fighting ships, though perhaps after some modification.¹³

The troops consisted of 5,100 hoplites, of whom 1,500 were Athenians drawn from the list of those liable for such service (*ek katalogou*: 6.43), and 700 thetes, the lowest property class, serving as marines, presumably aboard the fast triremes.¹⁴ The other hoplites were from states in the Athenian empire, apart from 500 Argives and 250 mercenaries from Mantinea and elsewhere.¹⁵ In addition, there were 480 archers, of whom 80 were Cretans, the rest, presumably, Athenians,



Map 9 Sicily and the toe of Italy

originally serving on the triremes. Finally, there were 700 Rhodian slingers and 120 exiles from Megara serving as light troops. There was also one horse-transport carrying thirty cavalry, though later the Athenians are said to have had none (6.64.1). Essential supplies were carried by thirty merchantmen, which also carried bakers, masons and carpenters and the tools for building fortifications. A hundred smaller craft had been requisitioned, and many other craft voluntarily accompanied the fleet to trade (6.44.1).

After sailing across the Ionian Sea and making landfall at the 'Iapygian promontory' (now Capo Santa Maria di Leuca), the fleet made its way to Rhegion. One disturbing discovery was that none of the cities they passed would allow them access, providing only water and anchorages, and Taras (Taranto) and Lokroi not even that (6.44.2). Taras' attitude was unsurprising since it had originally been a Spartan colony, and Lokroi had been hostile in the 420s (3.86.2, etc.). Diodoros (13.3.4) says they were welcomed at Thouria and allowed to buy provisions at Kroton, but although it is possible that the Thourians remembered that the original colonization of their city had been sponsored by Athens, Thucydides implies that an anti-Athenian faction was now in power (7.33.5–6). Kroton's founder supposedly came from Patrai (Strabo 8.7.5), and might have been friendly because of Alkibiades' help to its mother-city (5.52.2).

The people of Rhegion also gave them permission to draw their ships ashore outside the city and provided a market, but even they refused military help in favour of neutrality, at least until it was seen what other Italiot cities decided to do (6.44.3). Since they had been allies of the Athenians since 433/2 at latest (cf. ML 63=Fornara 124), and had co-operated with their forces in the 420s (3.86.2 and 5, etc.), their present attitude is puzzling, but possibly, like the other Italiot Greeks, they were alarmed at the sheer size of the Athenian armada.

The Athenian commanders now began to plan their strategy (6.44.4), but were dismayed when the three ships they had sent to Egesta returned with news that only thirty talents were available. It was now, too, that they learned of the trick that had been played on the original Athenian envoys (6.46). This came as no surprise to Nikias, however, and he proposed that they should proceed against Selinous, their principal objective. If the Egestaians were prepared to fund the whole fleet, they could reconsider; if not, they should demand that they at least provide for the sixty ships originally requested. By force or agreement, they should bring about a settlement between Egesta and Selinous, and then, after sailing past the other cities to demonstrate Athenian power, go home, taking no further risks unless some opportunity arose to help Leontinoi or win over other states (6.47). In short, Nikias was in favour of adhering strictly to their instructions, indeed, of putting a somewhat limited interpretation upon them.

Alkibiades, naturally, would have none of this, maintaining that it would be disgraceful to sail away without doing anything. Instead, they should approach all the cities except Syracuse and Selinous, and try to get the Sikels, the native population of Sicily, to join them. But first they should try to win over Messana (Messina), the gateway to Sicily. It would provide them with the perfect base. When they knew who their friends and enemies were would be the time to attack Syracuse and Selinous, unless the latter came to terms with Egesta and the former allowed the restoration of Leontinoi (6.48). Alkibiades was thus also in favour of sticking to their instructions, but put a wider interpretation upon them. In effect, he put the general instruction 'to take what other actions in Sicily they might think best for the Athenians' (6.8.2) first. Presumably, he assumed that Syracuse would reject the ultimatum about Leontinoi.¹⁶

The third Athenian general, Lamachos, advocated sailing immediately to Syracuse and fighting a battle there as soon as possible, while the enemy was still unprepared and in a state of alarm. The psychological effect of the sight of their armada would be at its greatest, and they might even be able to capture a number of Syracusans before they could take refuge in the city. The Sikels would be more likely to join them at once rather than wait to see which side was winning. He suggested the site of Megara Hyblaia as a suitable base (6.49). It had been deserted since its destruction by Gelon of Syracuse in 483 (6.4.2), and was only some 14 miles (22 kilometres) north of Syracuse.

Thucydides seems to have thought that Lamachos was right (cf. 6.63.2 and 7.42.3), and many agree with him.¹⁷ The arguments that the difficulties of forcing

a landing and fighting a battle without cavalry were against him are not compelling.¹⁸ As we have seen (above, p. 72), landings were hardly ever opposed in antiquity, and when the Athenians eventually landed here, they were not opposed. Nor did lack of cavalry prevent them from winning the ensuing battle. The main obstacle to the plan was that it was unlikely that the Syracusans would come to terms, even if they lost a battle outside their walls, as turned out to be the case. But it would, perhaps, have been worth a try. There was something to be said for Lamachos' psychological arguments, and for not giving the Syracusans any more time to prepare than was unavoidable.

Recently it has become fashionable to believe that Alkibiades was right,¹⁹ but there are serious objections. Apart from the fact that the delay involved removed any element of surprise, the Italiot and Sicilian Greeks had so far shown no inclination to help, and soon afterwards the people of Messina rejected Alkibiades' advances (6.50.1). Only the comparatively minor city of Naxos (now Taormina) willingly joined the Athenians (6.50.2). Even Katana, which became their first base in Sicily, at first refused to receive them (6.50.3), and was followed by Kamarina (6.52.1).

Discussion is usually confined to the proposals of Alkibiades and Lamachos, but it is arguable that it was Nikias who was right. If the Sicilian expedition was a mistake from the start, the sooner it was abandoned the better. Disaster would thus have been avoided, and all the consequences that flowed from it. The Athenians would have retained their navy intact, their allies would still have feared to revolt, the Spartans would have been less willing to try to match them at sea, and the Persians more reluctant to break with them. Whether any of the three commanders would have survived such a tame ending is debatable, but they could have argued that Eggestaian dishonesty and the lack of support from other western states had completely changed the situation. In any case, good generals should not think of their own skins in such circumstances.

But for all Lamachos' objections to Alkibiades' plan, it was nearer to his than Nikias', and he probably felt he lacked the prestige to carry the day. So Alkibiades prevailed and immediately began to put his plan into operation. His first step failed when, sailing to Messina, he found its people willing only to provide a market for the Athenians outside their city, and returned to Rhegium. Next, however, he took sixty ships and, accompanied by one of his fellow-commanders, probably Lamachos, sailed to Naxos, where he found a warmer welcome (6.50.2–3). But when they sailed on south down the coast, they found that the Katanaians, too, were unwilling to receive them, and anchored for the night off the River Terias (Fiume di San Leonardo) to the south.

Next day, they sailed to Syracuse, sending ten ships ahead to enter the Grand Harbour and see if there were any warships in the water. A proclamation was also made that they had come to restore the people of Leontinoi, in accordance with their alliance and the kinship between them, and any Leontinines in the city were invited to join them (6.50.4). This was, presumably, a piece of propaganda designed to show that the Athenians themselves had no ambitions in Sicily.

Having made the proclamation and completed their reconnaissance, they returned to Katana (6.50.5).

Here the people now allowed the commanders to address their assembly. What the outcome might have been in ordinary circumstances we cannot know. As it was, while Alkibiades was speaking, some Athenian soldiers broke down a badly built gate and appeared in the *agora*. Fearing that the Athenian army had entered the city, the pro-Syracusans immediately fled, and those who remained voted to conclude an alliance with the Athenians. The two commanders then returned to Rhegion and brought the whole fleet over to Katana (6.51).

Information was now received that Kamarina, too, might come over, and that the Syracusans were manning their fleet. The whole Athenian fleet immediately sailed first to Syracuse, where no sign of naval activity could be observed, and then on to a beach near Kamarina. A herald was sent to the city, but the Kamarinans would not even receive him, declaring they had sworn to give access to only a single Athenian ship, unless they themselves sent for more, in this probably referring to the agreement they had made with Laches (6.52.1; cf. 75.3).²⁰ In the face of this further blow to their hopes, the fleet returned to Katana via Syracuse, where this time a landing was made, and some light troops lost to Syracusan cavalry (6.52.2) – an early warning that they might have a problem with this arm of the Syracusan forces.

At Katana they found the *Salaminia* come to fetch Alkibiades and others home to stand trial for profanation of the Mysteries, and, in some cases, mutilation of the herms (6.53.1). Alkibiades was not arrested for fear of causing trouble in the army and also, apparently, of giving encouragement to the enemy (6.51.5), so it was on his own ship that he and the others left Sicily. When they reached Thouria, they jumped ship and disappeared into the city. The *Salaminia's* crew spent some time looking for them, but, failing to find anyone, returned to Athens, where Alkibiades was condemned to death *in absentia* (6.61.7). Meanwhile, he crossed to the Peloponnese on a Thourian ship.

Alkibiades' recall perhaps left Nikias in effective command, as Plutarch claims (*Nik.* 14.4 and 15.1), and certainly it looks as though the latter's original plan was now put into operation, the whole fleet sailing north through the Straits of Messina and then west along the north coast of Sicily. According to Thucydides (6.62.1), the intention was to see whether the Egestaians could provide the promised funds, and to look into the differences between them and the Selinountines, which is exactly what Nikias had proposed in the first place. They put in first at Himera, where they were refused admittance, and then took Hykkara (now Carini), a native town on the coast at war with Egesta. The town was handed over to the Egestaians, whose cavalry had come to help, but its inhabitants were shipped back to Katana, where they were sold. The Athenian army then marched back to Katana through friendly Sikel territory (6.62.2–3).

Nikias himself, meanwhile, made his way to Egesta and, after 'doing other business', as Thucydides enigmatically says (6.62.4), and securing the promised thirty talents, rejoined the fleet at Katana. The 'other business' was, presumably,

an attempt to patch up the Egestaians' differences with the Selinountines, but, if so, it evidently did not get very far. Nikias seems, in fact, to have made no attempt to contact the Selinountines, and to have decided at last to adopt Lamachos' strategy, by attacking Syracuse, though he presumably realized that it was now too late in the year to achieve any decisive result. Thucydides offers no direct explanation, and commentators talk only vaguely of Lamachos' strategy now being all that was left, and of Nikias' feeling that he must do something.²¹ Possibly, however, the attack was in response to the increasingly confident Syracusan mood and to pre-empt an attack on Katana. This is more or less what Thucydides implies (6.63), and it is clear from what he says that the Athenians would have had reliable information about Syracusan intentions. If even some success were achieved, Syracusan confidence would be dented, and it was always possible that boldness now, however late, might induce the city to come to terms.

Thucydides' analysis of Athenian thinking here deserves comment. He says they wanted somehow to lure the Syracusan forces away from the city, while they made their approach by sea under cover of darkness, so that they could seize a suitable beach-head unopposed. This would be much easier than if they had to make an opposed landing, or if they were to be seen approaching overland. In the latter case, their light troops and camp-followers would be liable to suffer from the numerous Syracusan cavalry, which had already frequently ridden over to Katana to taunt them for their inactivity (cf. 6.63.3).

Since, as we have seen (above, pp. 72 and 139), landings were rarely opposed, perhaps Nikias was being excessively cautious, though, to be fair, the proposed landing site was very near Syracuse. One notes, too, that an overland approach was apparently not regarded as dangerous for the hoplites, and one wonders why the camp-followers could not have been protected in a hollow square (*plaision*), as they were to be later in the battle (6.67.1): the formation was more usually adopted by forces on the move (cf. 4.125.2 and Xen., *Anab.* 1.8.9 and 3.2.36). More mysterious still is why the light troops, who had originally included 480 archers and 700 slingers (6.43), could not have kept the Syracusan cavalry at bay. However, the lack of a significant cavalry force would have made an approach by land more dangerous, and by far the quickest and safest way of delivering forces to the proximity of the city was by sea.

The operation was also well planned. False information was fed to the Syracusans through a Katanaian double-agent whom they thought they could trust, but who was really working for the Athenians. He said the latter habitually slept inside Katana, away from their equipment, possibly because the Katanaians did not trust them, and suggested the Syracusans come with all their forces on a given day, when their remaining Katanaian sympathizers would close the gates on the Athenians in the city and set fire to their ships (6.64.2–3). The Syracusan generals, who had been on the point of marching on Katana in any case, swallowed the story, and on the agreed day led their whole army to Katana, leaving troops from Selinous and others of their allies, to guard Syracuse. They

camped for the night on the River Symaithos (Simeto), some 8 miles (13 kilometres) from Katana and 30 miles (48 kilometres) from Syracuse. The Athenians, meanwhile, as soon as they heard the enemy were on their way, put all their forces, including their Sikel allies, on board ship and sailed for Syracuse that night. They landed at dawn inside the Grand Harbour, opposite the Olympieion (Le Colonne), the remains of which can still be seen on the rising ground south of the River Anapos, just under a mile (1.6 kilometres) from the shore (6.65.3).

In the absence of the Syracusan army, the Athenians had leisure to establish a secure beach-head, protected by walls, houses, trees and a marsh on one side, and cliffs on the other (6.66.1). There is some controversy about the exact location of the beach-head,²² but the most natural interpretation is that it was south of the Anapos, the houses, trees and marsh being to the north, in the direction of Syracuse, and the marsh, in particular, being formed by standing water at the mouth of the river. The cliffs will then be those to the southwest, where the Olympieion stood. In front of the beach-head they constructed a palisade to protect the ships, and to the south, near the shore, where they were particularly open to attack since the cliffs did not reach the sea, a strongpoint at a place called 'Daskon'. They also destroyed the bridge over the Anapos (6.66.2), presumably to make it at least more difficult for troops from the city to reach them. Meanwhile, the Syracusan cavalry had discovered that they had left Katana, and the whole army hastened back to the city's defence. But it had a considerable distance to cover, and arrived only after the Athenians had completed their defensive works. The Syracusans immediately deployed for battle, but when this drew no response retreated across the road to Heloros and camped for the night (6.66.3).

It usually seems to be assumed that this means that the Syracusans withdrew north of the Asopos, or had never even crossed it, and that next day the Athenians crossed the river to fight the battle. But Thucydides does not mention the river here or in his account of the battle, and it is more likely that the Syracusans first approached the Athenian beach-head from south of the Anapos. They would then have withdrawn westwards across the Heloros road, which would have run to the west, advancing from the same direction next day, and retreating to the road again after their defeat (6.70.4). It would also have been easier to send a force from here to the Olympieion after the battle (*loc. cit.*) than from north of the Asopos.

Similarly, it would have been natural for the Athenians to deploy for battle close to their camp, with their backs to the palisade protecting their ships, and that this is what they did is confirmed by what Thucydides says about their dispositions (6.67.1). Half their hoplites were drawn up in a hollow square (*plaision*), with the baggage-carriers in their midst and orders to support the other half, forming the main line-of-battle to their front, if it came under pressure. There thus cannot have been much distance between the hollow square and the front line, and the former was literally 'beside the beds' (*epi tais eunais*). In any case, the Lysimeleia

marsh lay somewhere north of the Asopos (7.53.2) and is presumably to be equated with the marsh which protected the Athenian beach-head. The Athenians will not have wanted to deploy either in it or with it at their backs.

It may be thought that there would not have been room for the battle south of the Anapos, but the 2,550 Athenian hoplites who formed the main body (6.43 and 67.1) would have required less than 200 yards (180 metres) to deploy at eight deep, and presumably the Syracusans even less at sixteen deep (6.67.2), though they would have needed space for 1,200 cavalry and their light troops, on their right. To place the battle here, in a relatively confined space, also explains why the Syracusan cavalry failed to outflank the Athenian left, and why there was apparently none of the usual edging to the right by the two phalanxes. The only real objection is that Thucydides says that some Syracusans, not expecting a battle so soon, had gone off because the city was near, and had to run to join the line wherever they could find a place (6.69.1). But he does not say they had gone as far as the city, and his description of the way they rejoined rather implies that they were scattered about between it and the army.²³

The battle itself, though inconclusive, is interesting for a number of reasons. First, although the Athenian hoplites forming the hollow square also had the job of protecting the baggage-carriers, they are specifically described by Thucydides as 'reserves' (*epitaktoi*: 6.67.1), and this is a rare, perhaps unique, example of the use of a reserve in a classical Greek battle.²⁴ Second, the Athenians put their Argive and Mantineian allies on the right of the main line, themselves in the middle and their other allies on the left, presumably because they did not envisage outflanking the enemy on either side. Third is Thucydides' scornful reference to the ebb and flow of the opening exchanges between the light troops on either side (6.69.2). This makes explicit what we so often have to assume: that there was really no place for such troops in a set-piece battle between hoplites.

After the seers had made the usual pre-battle sacrifices, the trumpets sounded the advance and the armies closed. For some time neither side gained any advantage, but then a thunderstorm burst upon the scene. This added to the apprehensions of the inexperienced Syracusans, but the more experienced Athenians realized this kind of thing happened at this time of year, and were more worried by the enemy's unexpected resistance. Finally, however, the Argives on the Athenian right pushed back the Syracusan left, and the Athenians also drove back those to their front, whereupon the whole Syracusan army fled. The Syracusan cavalry intervened to prevent pursuit (6.70.3), but about 260 of the Syracusans and their allies were killed, for the loss of only about 50 on the Athenian side (6.71.1).

Too much has been made here of the lack of Athenian cavalry. A more vigorous pursuit, it is suggested, resulting in heavier losses, might have induced the Syracusans to come to terms, and, in any case, an adequate cavalry force would have enabled the Athenians to begin the siege of Syracuse at once.²⁵ But this is to assume that Athenian cavalry would have been able to inflict heavier losses despite the presence of Syracusan cavalry, and that such losses would have had

the desired effect. It is true that Thucydides later seems to endorse Demosthenes' criticism of the Athenian withdrawal on this occasion, on the grounds that the delay allowed the Syracusans to recover confidence and Gylippos to enter the city (7.42.3).²⁶ But, although he implies a loss of morale in his summary of the speech of Hermokrates of Syracuse after the battle (6.72.2), he does not go so far as to suggest that there was already talk of coming to terms. Lack of cavalry was also probably not the main reason for the Athenian withdrawal. Admittedly, they now made a point of acquiring some from both Athens and Sicily (6.71.2, 74.2, 88.6 and 94.4), but it was clearly not vital to the siege, appearing only twice in the subsequent fighting (6.98 and 7.51.2).

The real failure was to have attacked Syracuse so late in the year that there was no realistic prospect of beginning a siege (cf. 6.71.2). It was probably this that prompted Aristophanes' punning reference to 'waiting for victory/Nikias' in *The Birds* (*mellonikian*: line 640), produced in the spring of the following year, rather than the failure to begin the siege in late 415, and it is possible that it was this delay which Demosthenes later criticized.²⁷

At all events, after the battle, the Athenians did not even make an attempt on the Olympieion, allowing the Syracusans to send troops to protect its treasures (6.70.4), and contenting themselves with stripping the enemy dead, erecting a trophy and cremating their own dead (6.70.3 and 71.1). Then, after spending just one night on the scene of their victory, they handed back the Syracusan dead and sailed away to winter quarters at Naxos and Katana (6.71.1 and 72.1). Thucydides says it was now winter and that it was not feasible to continue the war from the position they held until they acquired cavalry and funds from Athens and their Sicilian allies, and that they also hoped to win over some of the other Sicilians after their victory. Meanwhile, they would gather supplies and everything else they needed for renewing the attack on Syracuse in the spring (6.71.2). Accordingly, they sent a ship to Athens to ask for funds and cavalry, and the only offensive move they made was against Messana. Even this came to nothing since the pro-Syracusans there, forewarned by Alkibiades before he left, had already killed the leading pro-Athenians and secured control of the city (6.74).

The Syracusans were more active. Prompted by Hermokrates, they reorganized their command structure, electing three generals, including Hermokrates himself, in place of the existing fifteen, increased the number of hoplites by arming men who did not possess arms of their own, and instituted compulsory training (6.72.2–73). They also, Thucydides says (6.75.1), 'built, next to the city, taking in Temenites, a wall along all the part looking towards Epipolai, to prevent their being walled off from closer to, if they were defeated'. Unfortunately, we cannot be certain where this new wall ran. There is some reason to believe that Temenites was to the west of the city, but did the new wall curve back east towards the sea, parallel with the likely line of the old wall, or did it run north across Epipolai ('Over-city'), the plateau north and west of the city? The former is the more natural interpretation, particularly since the latter involves assuming that the eastern end of the plateau was not called Epipolai. But the Athenians are later

described as building their wall 'towards the north' (*pros borean*: 6.99.1) from the strongpoint called 'the circle', and Gylippos is said to have built his counter-wall 'across Epipolai' (*dia tôn Epipolôn*: 7.5.1), using the stones which the Athenians had previously laid down for their wall. This can hardly mean anything other than that the Athenian wall had been intended to run north across Epipolai, parallel to the new Syracusan wall under discussion. Thucydides' account of the fighting on Epipolai (6.98.2–103 and 7.4ff.), moreover, is easier to understand if we assume the Athenian wall ran north across the plateau, and that the Syracusan counter-walls ran west at right angles to their new wall.²⁸

In addition to their new wall, the Syracusans fortified Megara Hyblaia, northwards up the coast, and the Olympieion, and planted stakes in the sea wherever a landing seemed possible. Finally, knowing that the Athenians were then wintering at Naxos, they sent their whole army north to ravage the territory of Katana and burn the Athenian camp there (6.75.1–2). The Athenians rebuilt it when they moved back to Katana (6.88.5).

The winter of 415–14 also saw diplomatic activity in Sicily, Italy and Greece. In Sicily, hearing that the Athenians had sent envoys to Kamarina, the Syracusans sent a delegation of their own, including Hermokrates (6.75.3). Thucydides devotes eleven chapters (6.76–80 and 82–7) to the subsequent debate, and its conclusion (6.88) neatly encapsulates the difficulties faced by smaller cities during times of conflict between larger ones, particularly when, as here, the smaller cities were technically allied to both of the larger. In this case, the Kamarinaians, who had previously sent some cavalry to Syracuse's aid, wriggled out of their dilemma by deciding to give no further help to either side.

The Athenians also made efforts to win over the Sikels, and had some success with those living in the interior who were less vulnerable to Syracusan reprisals, securing both provisions and funds from them (6.88.3–4). They also asked both the Sikels and Egestaians for horses, and busied themselves with preparing everything necessary for the coming siege. Further afield, they sent envoys to both Carthage and the Etruscans, asking for help, and secured a favourable response from some of the latter (6.88.6). Surprisingly, perhaps, we hear nothing of Rome in all this. Meanwhile, Syracusan representatives who had been sent to ask for help from Corinth and Sparta called at Italian towns on the way, seeking to persuade them that the Athenians were just as dangerous to them as to Sicily. The Corinthians' response was predictable, in view of the ties between mother-city and colony. Not only did they promise all the help they could give, but they sent envoys to accompany the Syracusans to Sparta (6.88.7–8). Once there they found Alkibiades and his fellow-exiles, and it is to the renegade Athenian that Thucydides ascribes the success of their mission. According to him (6.88.10), the ephors and other Spartan authorities were not inclined to do anything but send envoys to Syracuse, and it was Alkibiades who, in a speech to the Spartan assembly (6.89–92), spurred the Spartans to do more, in particular, to send a Spartan to take command at Syracuse, and to establish a fortified base in Attica, at Dekeleia (6.91.4–7).

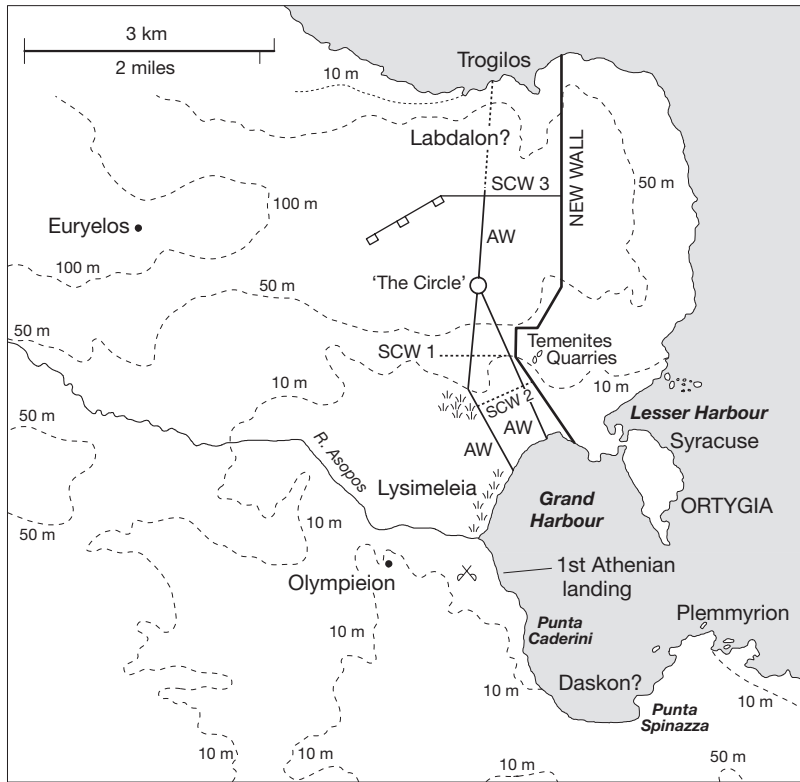
The Spartans had already been minded to invade Attica and so readily accepted the advice to fortify Dekeleia. But they also decided to appoint Gylippos, son of Kleandridas, to the Syracusan command, and instructed him to consult with the Syracusan and Corinthian envoys as to how best and most speedily to get help to Sicily. He immediately told the Corinthians to send two ships to Asine – presumably the one in Messenia (now Koroni) – to ready any others they thought of sending as soon as possible (6.93.2–3).

Operations in Sicily recommenced in the spring of 414 with the Athenians raiding Megara Hyblaia, and then, after a brief return to their base at Katana, Sikeli towns to the northwest, including Kentoripa (Centuripe) and Hybla (Paterno?). On their return again to Katana, they found there the expected reinforcements from Athens – 250 cavalry troopers who were expected to find mounts in Sicily, and 30 mounted archers. In addition there were 300 talents of silver, Thucydides' statement here (6.94.4) being confirmed by the surviving accounts of the treasurers of Athena (ML 77=Fornara 144, lines 73–4).

It is possible that the Athenian raiding in the northwest had persuaded the Syracusans that they were not about to be attacked after all, because, although Thucydides says they had heard of the arrival of the Athenian cavalry reinforcements and that an attack was imminent (6.96.1), in the event it came as a surprise. Realizing that no besieger could take the city without controlling Epipolai, they had resolved to guard its approaches, and to this end held a review of their army along the River Anapos. Here it was decided to set aside a special force of 600 hoplites under an Andrian exile named Diomilos (6.96).

As it happened, however, the Athenians had that very day moved their whole force by sea to Leon, just under a mile (1.5 kilometres) north of Epipolai, and while the sailors from the fleet constructed a palisade across the peninsula at Thapsos, the army made its way at the double on to Epipolai by way of Euryelos, which probably lay on or near the site of the modern village of Belvedere.²⁹ Surprise was complete, and although the Syracusans came up as quickly as possible from the fields where their review was being held, they had some 3 miles (5 kilometres) to go, and arrived piecemeal. The result was a considerable Athenian victory in which 300 Syracusans were killed, including the unfortunate Diomilos (6.97.1–4). Next day the Athenians offered battle nearer the city, but when no one came out to meet them they constructed a fort at Labdalon, on the steep ground somewhere along the northern edge of Epipolai (6.97.5). As with the previous year's landing, one is struck by the contrast between the Athenians' strategic ineptitude and their tactical expertise. One is tempted to think that Nikias was more or less responsible for the strategy, but left its tactical implementation to Lamachos. But perhaps that is unfair.

Having garrisoned Labdalon, the Athenians advanced to a place called Syke ('Fig-tree'), which probably lay towards the southern edge of Epipolai. Here they constructed another strong-point known as 'the circle', which was to become the centre point for their lines running south to the shore of the Grand



Key:

- AW = Athenian walls
- SCW 1, 2, 3 = Syracusan counter-walls
- NEW WALL = Wall built by Syracusans in winter 415-14
- ✕ = Site of battle in 415
- 10 m etc = Contours in metres

Map 10 Syracuse

Harbour and north to the sea on the other side of Epipolai. Thucydides says the Syracusans were dismayed by the speed of these operations, and decided again to give battle. But with the two armies already facing each other, the Syracusan generals saw that their men were not properly in line and withdrew to the city, leaving part of their cavalry to harass the building operations. By now, however, the Athenians had purchased horses for their own 250 cavalrymen, and had also received 300 cavalry from Egesta and 100 from the Sikels. With these they routed the Syracusan cavalry (6.98), and next day began constructing their lines north from 'the circle' towards Trogiolos, which was probably the ancient name for the Santa Panagia cove (6.99.1).

On the advice of Hermokrates, in particular, the Syracusans now gave up trying to oppose the enemy in pitched battle, and instead decided to try building

counter-works, beginning with one south of 'the circle', probably along the flat spur which separates Epipolai from the marshes of the Anapos (6.99.2–3). The Athenians responded by destroying the pipes carrying water into Syracuse, and then, waiting for a time when the Syracusan troops not actually on duty in the counter-work were either having a siesta in their tents or had even returned to the city, took and destroyed the counter-work in a well-planned, three-pronged attack. At one point, some Athenian and Argive troops, following hard on the heels of fugitives, even managed to break into the newly fortified Temenites district, but were driven out with some loss (6.100.2).

The following day, the Athenians began constructing their lines south from Epipolai to the Grand Harbour, and this provoked the Syracusans to try to build a counter-work across the marsh. Again the Athenians responded vigorously by attacking the counter-work at dawn, while ordering the fleet round from Thapsos to the Grand Harbour. They rapidly captured the Syracusan stockade and ditch, but in the confused fighting that followed, although they were generally successful, Lamachos himself was killed (6.101).³⁰

This had the effect of restoring the confidence of the Syracusan troops who had retreated to the city. While some came out again to fix the attention of the Athenians in the flat ground between the marsh and the city walls, others staged an attack on 'the circle', assuming that it would be undefended now that most of the Athenian troops had gone down to attack the counter-work. As luck would have it, however, Nikias had remained behind sick, and he ordered the soldier-servants to set fire to the siege-engines and other timber that lay in front of 'the circle'. This delayed the attackers long enough for help to arrive from the rest of the army, and at the same time the Syracusans were dismayed to see the Athenian fleet sailing into the Grand Harbour. The result was that all the Syracusans now withdrew to the safety of the city walls, assuming that they could no longer prevent the Athenians' construction of their lines down to the shore of the Grand Harbour (6.102).

This was, perhaps, the nearest the Athenians ever came to success. They now completed a double line of fortifications from 'the circle' down to the Grand Harbour, and their continuing triumphs won them the support not only of many of the Sikels, but also of the Etruscans, who sent three ships to their aid. Thucydides, indeed, says that at this point the Syracusans began to discuss surrender not only among themselves but with Nikias (6.103.3), and replaced their generals, including Hermokrates, who had so nearly led them to disaster. Help was on its way, in the form of Gylippos' fleet, but if Thucydides is to be believed, he, too, gave up all hope of saving the city when rumours reached him off Leukas that it was now entirely cut off by the Athenian lines (6.104.1).

DISASTER IN SICILY

With victory in his grasp, Nikias became complacent. He got wind of Gylippos' advance, but was so contemptuous that he took no precautions (6.104). He could hardly have made a bigger mistake, for Gylippos was nothing if not persistent. Despite his despair off Leukas, he pressed on to Taras with two Corinthian and two Spartan ships. From there he sent to Thouria to remind its people of the citizenship his exiled father had once enjoyed there,¹ but was rebuffed, and when he put to sea again he was forced to return to Taras by bad weather. Nothing daunted, he refitted his ships, and, once more putting to sea, made for Lokroi.

Here he at last had some good news: Syracuse was not in fact cut off and it was still possible to get into the city by way of Epipolai. He rejected the idea of trying to reach it directly by sea, though others were later to do it, and instead decided to make for Himera on the north coast, and then try to get to Syracuse overland. By this time Nikias had belatedly sent four ships to intercept him, but these had not yet reached Rhegion, so he was able to pass through the Straits of Messina, calling in at Rhegion and Messana on the way, and to reach Himera without interference (7.1.1–2).

Here he hauled his ships ashore and immediately succeeded in persuading the Himeraians to join him on his march to Syracuse and to arm his crews. These were, presumably, hoplites who had rowed the ships to Sicily, as Alkibiades had recommended (6.91.4). His own troops are later said to have numbered 'about 700 sailors and marines' (7.1.5), and the normal complements of four triremes would have been 680 oarsmen and 40 marines. In addition, he received 1,000 hoplites and light troops and 100 cavalry from Himera, other troops from Selinous and Gela, and about 1,000 men from the Sikels (7.1.5). Diodoros (13.7.7) says his whole army numbered 3,000 infantry and 300 cavalry, which seems about right.

Meanwhile, the remaining ships he had left off Leukas were making their best speed to Syracuse. The first to arrive, though it started last, was commanded by Gongylos of Corinth. He perhaps took the direct route across the Ionian Sea, and presumably made for the lesser harbour between Ortygia and Santa Lucia, on the other side of the city from the Grand Harbour, where the Athenian fleet was now based. But his success in evading it is another reminder that triremes

were not designed for a constant blockade. He came in the nick of time, if we are to believe Thucydides. The Syracusans were about to hold an assembly to debate ending the war, thus bringing out into the open the secret discussions they had earlier been having among themselves and with Nikias (7.2.1; cf. 6.103.3–4). Gongylos was able to prevent the holding of the assembly, and put fresh heart into the Syracusans. He assured them that more ships were on their way and that Gylippos had been sent by the Spartans to organize the defence. Presumably Gylippos' position on his arrival had been accepted in his talks with the Syracusan representatives at Sparta (cf. 6.93.2), and now the Syracusans enthusiastically sent their whole army out to meet him (7.2.2).

Having taken a Sikel fort on the way, Gylippos had now reached the foot of Epipolai. Here he deployed his army for battle and then made his way on to the plateau via Euryelos, the same route the Athenians had taken – a striking example of how careless ancient armies could be about picketing. Once on Epipolai, he apparently joined up with the Syracusans, and immediately prepared to assault the Athenian lines. These were by now almost complete from 'the circle' to the Grand Harbour, and in an advanced state on the other side of 'the circle'. Stones had been laid down over most of the distance and some sections were half finished, others complete. As Thucydides says (7.2.4), 'Syracuse had come this close to catastrophe.'

The Athenians were at first thrown into confusion by the sudden appearance of Gylippos and the Syracusans, but they managed to deploy in time. Gylippos halted a short distance away, and sent forward a herald to say that if they were willing to leave Sicily within five days, he was ready to make peace. Presumably this was primarily intended to show the Syracusans how confident he was, but the Athenians treated it with contempt, sending the herald back without an answer. In fact, Gylippos soon realized that the Syracusans were again being slow to take up their proper positions (cf. 6.98.3), and withdrew to more open terrain, most likely to give his cavalry and light troops more room (7.3.1–3).

Nikias should now have given battle. If he had lost, he could have withdrawn to the comparative safety of his lines and there reconsidered his options. But if he had won, the new-found confidence of the Syracusans would have been shattered, and they might well have returned to the negotiating table. But he let the opportunity slip, staying close to his lines, and Gylippos took his army into the city (7.3.3). Next day, he deployed most of his forces opposite the Athenian lines in the southern part of Epipolai to prevent help being sent to any other danger spot, but sent part to attack the strong-point at Labdalon, which was out of sight of the manned section of the lines. Labdalon was captured and its garrison annihilated. As if to set the seal on the change of fortunes, the Syracusans captured an Athenian trireme blockading what Thucydides calls 'the harbour', by which he probably means the smaller one.² This was, ominously, the first Syracusan success at sea.

The Syracusans now began to construct a third counter-work, this time across Epipolai, probably from the new wall they had built during the winter of 415/14

(6.75.1), 'towards the point at which it would be at a right-angle to the Athenian works'.³ As Thucydides remarks (7.4.1), 'unless the Athenians could prevent this, they would no longer be able to cut off Syracuse', but instead of dropping everything to concentrate on completing at least some sort of lines northwards to the sea from 'the circle', they apparently concentrated first on completing the double lines southwards to the Grand Harbour. Gylippos, too, helped to keep them distracted by launching a night attack on a weak section of their existing lines. As it happened, this was for once well guarded and he had to withdraw without accomplishing anything, but the Athenians then turned their attention to strengthening the weak spot, and settled down to guard it themselves while assigning other stretches to their allies (7.4.2–3).

Worse still, instead of pressing on with the lines north of 'the circle', Nikias now decided to fortify Plemmyrion, the point on the south side of the entrance to the Grand Harbour, to facilitate bringing in supplies. It was also nearer the lesser harbour where the Syracusan dockyard was (7.22.1), and it would be easier to move ships from there to meet any naval threat than from the corner of the Grand Harbour where the Athenian lines came down to the sea. So three forts were built on the point, and most of the equipment was now stored there. It also became the base for the larger merchantmen and the fast triremes (7.4.5).

So far so good, but Thucydides also notes that Nikias was now paying more attention to naval operations, since his hopes of success had declined (7.4.4), and this suggests he was thinking more of being in a position to withdraw safely, if it came to that, than of bringing the siege to a successful conclusion. There were also disadvantages to Plemmyrion, and Thucydides dates the deterioration of the Athenian crews to the move (7.4.6). Water was in short supply and had to be fetched from a distance, and the gathering of firewood led to losses at the hands of the Syracusan cavalry, a third of which was stationed at the Olympieion for this very purpose. Why Athenian cavalry was not stationed at Plemmyrion to counter this threat is not explained. All in all, it would have been better just to station a small force at Plemmyrion, including warships, to guard the entrance to the Grand Harbour, and supply it by sea.⁴

Meanwhile, Gylippos rightly concentrated on the completion of the counter-wall, using the stones the Athenians had laid down for their lines. He also daily deployed for battle, while the Athenians did the same. As it turned out, he finally brought it about in the wrong place, in the angle between the converging lines where there was no room for the Syracusan cavalry, and was defeated (7.5.1–3). But he acutely managed to turn the defeat to good account. Calling his troops together, he confessed that the fault was his, not theirs, and said he would lead them out a second time. They should bear in mind that their equipment was as good as the enemy's, and that it would be intolerable if Peloponnesians and Dorians could not beat Ionians, islanders and other riff-raff (7.5.3–4).

In the ensuing second battle, with room to manoeuvre on the right, his cavalry routed the Athenian left, whereupon the whole Athenian army broke and fled

back to its lines. Again one wonders where the Athenian cavalry was. Not only was this the Syracusans' first real success on land, but next night they carried their counter-wall past the end of the Athenian lines, and thus, as Thucydides says (7.6.4), effectively ended any chance that the city could be invested.

Shortly after this, the remaining twelve Corinthian, Ambrakiot and Leukadian ships reached Syracuse, evading not only the squadron Nikias had sent out to intercept them (cf. 7.4.7) but the blockade, and thus demonstrating that it was feasible for more than one ship at a time. Their crews then helped the Syracusans to complete their counter-wall. More ominously, they encouraged them to try their hands at sea. So, while Gylippos went off to try to raise both military and naval help from the rest of Sicily, and Syracusan and Corinthian representatives were sent to Sparta and Corinth to ask for reinforcements, the Syracusans manned their fleet and began to train their crews (7.7.1–4).

Nikias now realized that unless he and his forces were recalled or significantly reinforced, they faced disaster. In a passage illustrating one drawback of the Athenian system of direct democracy, Thucydides says that the Athenian commander feared that couriers might not report the facts of the situation, 'through either being tongue-tied or lapse of memory or desire to say something to please the crowd' (7.8.2). So he also sent a letter, which Thucydides purports to quote verbatim (7.11–15).⁵ This, too, tells us much about the potential drawbacks of the Athenian system, at least in wartime.

After summarizing the situation on land (7.11), the letter emphasizes the growing threat at sea. The Athenian ships had deteriorated because they could not be hauled ashore and dried out in case the enemy attacked and because they had to maintain the blockade (7.12). The crews were also deteriorating because of the attentions of the Syracusan cavalry when they went out for firewood, plunder or water, while the slaves and foreign sailors were deserting; some oarsmen were even buying slaves to take their places (7.13). Since Athenians were 'naturally difficult to control' (7.14.2), Nikias could not prevent this, and while the enemy had plenty of sources of fresh recruitment, he had none. It needed only the few states in Italy on which they relied for supplies to abandon them and they were finished. Knowing their nature, he was aware that what he had to say was unpleasant, but he thought it safer to tell the truth (7.14). Neither his men nor their commanders were to blame, but they must either be recalled or reinforced, and he himself must be replaced because he was suffering from a kidney complaint (7.15).

Though his attitude must have seemed almost entirely defeatist, the Athenians refused to relieve Nikias of his command. Instead, they appointed two officers already in Sicily to share it until reinforcements arrived under Demosthenes and Eurymedon. The latter, who had already served in Sicily, though not altogether happily, was to leave at once with 10 ships and 120 talents of silver, though it was 'about the time of the winter solstice' (then about 24 December), while Demosthenes was to leave in the spring. Twenty ships were also sent to Naupaktos to prevent anyone crossing to Sicily from Corinth or elsewhere in the

Peloponnese, a move which the Corinthians countered by manning twenty-five ships of their own (7.16–17).

At the very beginning of the following spring (March 413), the Spartans and their allies invaded Attica for the first time since 425, and, as Alkibiades had advised, fortified Dekeleia. This was only some 13 miles (21 kilometres) from Athens and visible from the city (7.19.1–2). They also sent off the promised reinforcements for Sicily, consisting of 600 helots and *neodamôdeis* equipped as hoplites, and 1,000 others from Boiotia, Corinth, Arkadia and Sikyon. They were transported on merchant ships, but their departure was covered by the twenty-five Corinthian warships, which took station opposite Naupaktos (7.19.3–5).

Despite the Peloponnesian presence in Attica, the Athenians also sent out 95 triremes, 30 under Charikles, who was to pick up hoplite marines from Argos, and 60 Athenian and 5 Chian under Demosthenes, with 1,200 Athenian hoplites and as many as they could recruit from the islands in their empire (7.20.1–2). It later emerges that there were eventually 5,000 hoplites and a large number of javelineers, archers and slingers, both Greek and non-Greek, as well as 73 triremes, in the forces Demosthenes and Eurymedon brought to Sicily (7.42.1).

Meanwhile, Gylippos returned to Syracuse with as large a force as he had been able to raise, and, with Hermokrates' support, immediately urged the Syracusans to man as many ships as possible and try their luck at sea. This they did, bringing 45 triremes round from their dockyard in the lesser harbour to join the 35 in the Grand Harbour. Gylippos himself proposed to attack Plemmyrion. The Athenians responded by manning 60 triremes, 25 to fight the Syracusan ships in the Grand Harbour, 35 to try to prevent those coming from the lesser harbour from joining their comrades (7.21–2). That the Athenians were outnumbered confirms what Thucydides says about the deterioration of their fleet, since, although they had originally had precisely 60 'fast' (*tacheiai*) ships of their own, that is fighting ships as opposed to transports (*stratiôtides*: cf. 6.43), some of the additional allied ships were presumably fast, and, in any case, transports could easily and rapidly have been converted to warships.⁶

It appears that the Syracusans had the better of things at first in both the naval engagements, but while the Athenians at Plemmyrion had their attention fixed on these, Gylippos succeeded in capturing the three forts, though most of those manning them managed to escape. Meanwhile, although the Syracusan ships from the lesser harbour were able to force their way into the Grand Harbour, they then fell into disorder and were routed. Presumably then some at least of the victorious Athenian ships went to the aid of their hard-pressed comrades. In the end, the overall result at sea was an Athenian victory, the Syracusans losing eleven ships, the Athenians three (7.23). But what had happened on land was disastrous. Not only did it mean the loss of equipment, stores and other property, including the masts and rigging for forty triremes, together with three triremes that had been hauled ashore there, but it made it more difficult for the Athenians

to bring in supplies by sea, since the Syracusans stationed ships there and Athenian ships now had to fight their way in (7.24).

Nor were the Syracusans disheartened by their comparative failure at sea. Instead, they sent out twelve ships, one to take the good news to the Peloponnese and to urge their allies there to prosecute the war even more vigorously in Greece, the others to intercept ships bringing supplies to the Athenians and to raid the territory of Kaulonia, where timber for the Athenian fleet was stocked. They also met one of the merchantmen from the Peloponnese with some Thespian hoplites on board. These they took aboard, presumably for safety's sake, and then returned to Syracuse, losing only one ship to the twenty Athenian warships that had been sent out to intercept them (7.25.1–4). Fighting also continued in the Grand Harbour, particularly around the piles the Syracusans had driven into the seabed to protect their anchored warships (7.25.5–8).

Meanwhile, Demosthenes had joined Charikles at Argos and their combined fleets had then raided Lakonia and established a fort there, before Demosthenes went on his way to Sicily, and Charikles returned to Athens (7.26).⁷ At Pheia on the coast of Elis, Demosthenes captured one of the merchantmen waiting to take troops to Sicily, though the men escaped and later found another ship. He then went on to Zakynthos and Kephallenia, where he took some hoplites on board and sent for others from the Messenians at Naupaktos. Next he crossed to Akarnania to raise slingers and javelineers. Here he met Eurymedon, who was returning from Sicily after delivering the funds entrusted to him, and who reported the capture of Plemmyrion. They were also asked by Konon, the commander of the Athenian squadron at Naupaktos, for help in dealing with the twenty-five Corinthian ships in his neighbourhood. It is an indication of the erosion of Athenian confidence that with eighteen ships he was unwilling to challenge twenty-five of the enemy. Giving him ten of their fastest vessels, Demosthenes and Eurymedon then went on to Kerkyra, where they enlisted more men and ships (7.31).

In Sicily, at Nikias' request, Athens' allies among the Sikels ambushed a force raised by Syracusan and Corinthian envoys on its way to Syracuse, though the sole surviving envoy, a Corinthian, managed to lead the remaining 1,500 men to the city (7.32). Soon afterwards, 1,700 hoplites, javelineers, archers and cavalry, and the crews for five ships, arrived from Kamarina and Gela (7.33.1). At the same time, Demosthenes and Eurymedon crossed from Kerkyra to Italy and made for the Choirades islands, probably off Taras. Here they took on board 150 Messapian javelineers provided by Artas, the local chief, who had apparently formed a friendship with Demosthenes in the past, though how this happened Thucydides does not say (7.33.4). From there the Athenian fleet went on to Metaponton, where it collected 300 more javelineers and two triremes, and finally to Thouria, where it learned that the anti-Athenian faction had recently been ousted (7.33.5–6).

It was at about this time that a significant, though small-scale, action was fought between the Athenian squadron based on Naupaktos, now commanded by

Diphilos, and the twenty-five Peloponnesian ships covering it. Commanded by the Corinthian Polyantes, these had taken up a strong defensive position at Erineon (or Erineos) in the territory of Rhype in Achaia. The ships were moored across the entrance to a crescent-shaped bay formed by two jutting headlands, probably where the modern village of Lembíri now lies (cf. Pausanias 7.22.10); the headlands were occupied by local troops (7.34.1–2). Here the Peloponnesians were attacked by Diphilos' thirty-three ships.

In the ensuing engagement, three Corinthian ships were destroyed, but, although no Athenian ship was 'sunk' outright, seven were disabled after being rammed head-on and having their outriggers shorn off by the specially strengthened cat-heads of the enemy ships (7.34.5).⁸ The Athenians were able to tow all the wrecks away, thanks to an offshore wind, but their morale was severely dented. Thucydides' comment says it all: 'the Corinthians thought they had won if they were not defeated by much, while the Athenians reckoned they had lost if they did not win by much' (7.34.7).

Meanwhile, Demosthenes and Eurymedon, now joined by 700 hoplites and 300 javelineers from Thouria, ordered their ships to sail along the coast to the territory of Kroton, while they themselves paraded their whole army on the River Sybaris (the modern Crati), and then marched to the Hylas, which clearly marked the eastern boundary of Thourian territory, though its modern name is unknown. Here they were met by ambassadors from Kroton, who declared that they were unwilling to allow them through their territory, whereupon they returned to the coast and re-embarked. They then put in at all the coastal cities except Lokroi, until they reached the vicinity of Rhegion (7.35.2). They evidently did not attempt to put in there, where the previous expeditionary force had received a hostile welcome, despite its alliance with Athens.

By now the Syracusans had learned of their approach and decided to launch a land and sea attack on their besiegers before the reinforcements arrived. As the Corinthians had done before Erineon, they also took steps to strengthen the prows of their warships. They thickened the cat-heads, but they also reduced the length of the prows to make them more solid, and reinforced the cat-heads with stays apparently running through the sides of the ship to an interior main beam (7.36.1–2). In one of the most important passages for our understanding of fifth-century naval tactics that has survived (7.36.3–6), Thucydides explains the thinking behind these modifications. Basically, in the confined waters of the Grand Harbour, the Athenians would not be able to use their favourite tactics of rowing round the ends of the enemy line (the *periplous*) or rowing through it (the *diekplous*) to ram in side or stern. Nor would they be able to back water to give themselves room to manoeuvre when in difficulties. They would have their sterns to the short stretch of shore occupied by their camp, whereas the Syracusans now commanded the rest of the bay. Fighting in such a confined space, the lighter, faster Athenian galleys would be at a disadvantage. They would be forced to ram prow to prow and their lighter prows would not withstand the specially strengthened prows of the Syracusan ships.

Once their preparations were complete, the Syracusans launched their land and sea assault. Gylippos deployed the troops from the city opposite the Athenian lines, while those from the Olympieion, including hoplites, cavalry and light troops, advanced on them from the opposite side. The Athenians, thinking at first that they faced only attack by land, were thrown into confusion when they saw the enemy fleet also bearing down upon them. But they rapidly took up their positions, some inside, some outside the lines, and manned 75 ships against about 80 of the enemy. The whole day was taken up by indecisive skirmishing, though the Syracusans did succeed in 'sinking' one or two Athenian ships. Next day the Syracusans made no move, but Nikias, expecting another naval attack, had all damaged ships refitted and anchored a line of merchant ships, about 200 feet (60 metres) apart, in front of the stockade protecting their camp on the shore. The gaps were designed to allow Athenian ships in difficulties to pass through and then return to the fray.

On the third day, the Syracusans attacked earlier than usual, but again the better part of the day was taken up with indecisive skirmishing. But then Ariston of Corinth, described by Thucydides as the best helmsman in the Syracusan fleet (7.39.2), suggested that the commanders ask the city authorities to arrange for a market to be set up down by the shore and make anyone who had provisions come and sell them there. In this way, the sailors could eat a meal by their ships and then renew the attack on the unsuspecting Athenians that same day (7.39).

One is struck here by the amateurish way in which the Greeks managed the provisioning of their forces, but the plan worked. The Syracusans suddenly backed water and made off to the vicinity of the city, where they disembarked and prepared a meal. The Athenians, thinking they had withdrawn because they thought they were beaten, also disembarked and busied themselves with various tasks, including the preparation of a meal, assuming that they would not have to fight again that day. Suddenly the Syracusans manned their ships and bore down upon them. The Athenians, in confusion and mostly still not having eaten, clambered aboard in disorder and just managed to clear the shore in time. Seeing that their surprise had failed, the Syracusans held off, and for some time each side watched the other warily. But then the Athenians, rather than allow weariness to take hold, decided to attack (7.40.1–4).

The Syracusans stuck to their plan of ramming prow to prow, and the specially modified bows of their ships ripped away much of the outriggers of the Athenian ships. The javelineers on their decks also did considerable damage, and even more so Syracusans in light boats who slipped in under the banks of oars and flung javelins from close alongside. In the end, the Athenians broke and fled to their anchorage through the gaps between the merchantmen. The Syracusans pursued as far as the line of merchantmen, but were then deterred by the beams carrying dolphin-shaped lumps of iron suspended above the gaps. Two of their ships, flushed with success, came too near and were eliminated, one being captured with its crew. In all, however, they 'sank' seven Athenian ships and crippled many

others. After withdrawing, they set up trophies, and now had high hopes of winning at sea and even, possibly, on land (7.40.5–41).

Thucydides' description of the battle makes it clear that the Syracusan success stemmed almost completely from the confined space in which it was fought. This left no room for the Athenians to use their speed and manoeuvrability, which, in open waters, would have prevented the Syracusans ramming prow to prow and remaining close enough to make full use of their javelineers. As for the light craft, they would have run the risk of being rammed and 'sunk' long before they could get in under the banks of oars. One is reminded that for all their technological brilliance, triremes had strictly limited capabilities.

Syracusan euphoria rapidly turned to dismay, however, when, soon after their victory, Demosthenes and Eurymedon arrived with their reinforcements. As Thucydides says (7.42.2), there seemed to be no possibility of final deliverance from danger, when, despite the occupation of Dekeleia, they saw another armada arriving, almost as big as the first. Conversely, the original Athenian forces, despite the recent disasters, felt their strength returning.

Demosthenes immediately realized that something must be done at once while the impact of their arrival was still fresh in the minds of both sides, and was, according to Thucydides (7.42.3), critical of the way Nikias had squandered the effect of his own coming. He also saw that the third Syracusan counter-wall was the key to the situation, and decided to attack it, first by winning control of the way up to Epipolai and of the enemy camp there (7.42.4–5).⁹ As a preliminary, however, the Athenian army sallied out and ravaged the area around the Anapos, launching their fleet, too, presumably to prevent any interference from the enemy fleet. This may possibly have been a feint to convince the enemy that they had no new strategy, but was also probably intended to drive home the superiority they now enjoyed by both land and sea. As it was, Thucydides says (7.42.6), the only enemy forces who ventured to oppose them were some cavalry and javelineers from the Olympieion.

Next Demosthenes appears to have launched a direct assault on the counter-wall from the Athenian lines, presumably using 'the circle' as a jumping-off point. But the siege-engines he tried to use were set on fire as they were being dragged forward, and everywhere his attacks were beaten off. Again one wonders whether this was a feint to deceive the enemy into assuming that he could think of no other way of taking the counter-wall, though it was also worth a try. Certainly, having failed, he immediately put his more ambitious plan of overrunning Epipolai into effect (7.43.1).

He realized that by day it would be impossible to avoid being seen both in the approach to and in the ascent of Epipolai, and decided to make the attempt by night. He ordered his men to take rations for five days, and assembled all the masons, carpenters and archers, and everything they might require, if successful, to complete their own lines. Then, at what Thucydides calls 'the first sleep' (7.43.2: about 10 p.m.?), he himself, with Eurymedon and Menander, advanced on Epipolai with the whole army, leaving Nikias in the lines. Unseen by the

Syracusan guards, they took the fort at Euryelos, but most of its garrison escaped to the camps occupied by the Syracusans and their allies, which formed some kind of outworks to the counter-wall.¹⁰

The first to be informed of the Athenian attack were the 600 hoplites formed the year before to act as guards for Epipolai (cf. 6.96.3), but though they put up a spirited resistance, they were routed. While some Athenians then pressed on to other objectives before their impetus slackened, others attacked the counter-wall, tearing down its battlements, with little resistance from its guards. The Syracusans and their allies, including Gylippos and his men, came up to help from the outworks, but the night attack was unexpected, and, engaging in some panic, they were initially forced back. However, the Athenians had now fallen into some disorder themselves, thinking they had won and wanting to finish the job before their progress slowed and the enemy rallied. This gave the Boiotians, first, the chance to make a stand, and they succeeded in turning the Athenians and putting them to flight (7.43.4–7).

Confusion and bewilderment now gripped the Athenian army, and Thucydides admits (7.44.1) that it was not easy to find out what happened, from either side. As he says, even in daylight those taking part in a battle know only what is going on in their immediate vicinity, but at night how could anyone clearly know anything? His account is a classic illustration of the difficulties and dangers of fighting in the dark. With large numbers of similarly equipped hoplites milling about in a relatively confined space, it was impossible to tell which side anyone was on, even though there was a moon. The leading Athenians were already in flight, but those coming up behind, some still making the ascent, did not know what was happening, and the cheering of the enemy added to their confusion. They began to take anyone coming towards them as hostile, and their demands for the password soon gave it away, while the accent of their own Dorian allies singing the paian added to the panic. The result was that they ended by fighting among themselves, and the rout was compounded by the narrowness of the escape route. Many were killed jumping over the cliffs and among those who got down, though the old hands knew the way back to camp, many of the newcomers were still wandering about when day dawned and were killed by the Syracusan cavalry (7.44.2–8).

A night attack is notoriously difficult to co-ordinate, even when those engaged know the terrain, have good maps and modern means of communication. As Thucydides notes (7.44.1), this was the only large-scale night operation in this war, and perhaps the Athenians should not be blamed for their failure. Nevertheless, one feels they made mistakes that could have been avoided. There appears to have been some attempt to assign different objectives to different units, some directly attacking the Syracusan counter-wall, while others dealt with the main body of enemy troops on the plateau (7.43.5). But the latter seem to have had no clear objective and should have been made to halt and stand on the defensive once a certain point had been reached. This would have avoided much of the confusion, and it was not beyond the wit of even ancient commanders to

devise some way of distinguishing their men from the enemy: Herodotos says that the Phokians had once used gypsum to whitewash men designated to make a night attack (8.27.3). Demosthenes, in particular, from his own use of Doric speakers to confuse enemy sentries at Idomene (cf. 3.112.4), should have realized that the Doric speakers in the Athenian army in Sicily might cause confusion, and should have told them to keep their mouths shut. Finally, although no one in the Athenian army could have been expected to know the terrain really well, it might have been a good idea at least to mix some of the older hands with the newcomers (cf. 7.44.8).¹¹

As it was, the disaster was decisive. While the Syracusans sent Gylippos and Sikanos, one of their own citizens, to try to raise yet more troops from Akragas and elsewhere, the Athenians immediately began to discuss withdrawal. Demosthenes was strongly in favour, forcefully pointing out that fighting those who were building forts in Attica would be of more help to Athens than waging war against Syracusans (7.47.4). Nikias, however, while admitting that they were in a bad way, was on various grounds reluctant to come out openly for withdrawal. There was the military consideration – it was better to keep the enemy guessing – and he had his own reasons for believing that treachery might yet deliver Syracuse into their hands, reasons which Thucydides says (7.49.1) stemmed from accurate information about the state of affairs in the city. Above all, there were his fears about the possible reaction back home, fears he had already expressed in his letter of winter 414/13 (cf. 7.14.4). Even when Demosthenes proposed a compromise withdrawal to Thapsos or Katana and was backed by Eurymedon, Nikias refused to accept (7.49.2–4).

Meanwhile, Gylippos and Sikanos returned to Syracuse, the former with another considerable force consisting partly of Sicilians, partly of Peloponnesians who had reached Selinous after an adventurous journey that had taken them as far as Libya and Carthaginian territory (7.50.1–2). With these additional forces, the Syracusans again prepared to attack the Athenians by both land and sea, while Athenian dismay at the arrival of yet more enemy troops at last brought even Nikias round to accepting the necessity of withdrawal (7.5.3).

But it was not to be. When the Athenians were on the point of sailing, there was an eclipse of the moon, calculated by modern astronomers to be that of 27 August 413. Most of the Athenians, taking this as a bad omen, urged their commanders to delay their departure, and Nikias, who, Thucydides scathingly remarks (7.50.4), was ‘rather too much given to divination and suchlike’, came out firmly in favour of waiting the ‘thrice nine days’ recommended by the seers. Here it should be noted that Thucydides, unlike Diodoros (13.12.6), Plutarch (*Nik.* 23) and many modern commentators, does not hold Nikias solely to blame, but rather implies that he should not have gone along with his more ignorant men. Nor should we take too superior a view. During the American Civil War, for example, both Union and Confederate soldiers took a lunar eclipse as a bad omen, and the Union army concluded that it meant ill-luck for the Confederates since, being on a ridge, they were nearer to the moon!¹²

The Syracusans now became more determined than ever not to allow the Athenians to escape, and began to train their crews for a decisive battle. First, however, they made an assault on part of the Athenian lines, and defeated a small force of hoplites and cavalry that came out to meet them (7.51.2). Presumably this was designed more to keep the Athenians fully stretched than to force the issue. Next day attacks were also made by sea as well as by land, with 76 Syracusan ships engaging 86 Athenian. The result was another Athenian defeat. In particular, Eurymedon, commanding the Athenian right and attempting to outflank the enemy's left, was caught and driven ashore when the Athenian centre gave way, he himself being killed and the ships with him destroyed (7.52.2). Diodoros (13.13.4) gives the number of ships lost as seven, and places the incident in a bay called Daskon. This is mentioned by Thucydides in his account of the battle on the shore of the Grand Harbour in 415 (6.66.2), and was possibly the bay between the modern Punta Caderini and Punta Spinazza.¹³ Eurymedon's death was the signal for the rout of the entire Athenian fleet, and Diodoros may well be right that the collapse began with those next to his squadron (13.3.5).

The only area in which the Athenians had any success was on land. When Gylippos saw that many of the Athenian ships had been driven ashore outside the stockade surrounding their base, he took some men to the spit of land between the Lysimeleia marsh and the sea, north of the Anapos,¹⁴ to kill Athenian sailors as they left their ships and to help the Syracusans drag away the ships. However, some Etruscans the Athenians had stationed to watch this point, seeing Gylippos' men in disorder, sallied out and drove them into the marsh. Better still, when Syracusan reinforcements appeared on the scene, they too were routed and most of the ships brought back safely within the stockade, though eighteen were captured and their crews annihilated. The Athenians also succeeded in dealing with a fire-ship which the Syracusans sent against the rest of their fleet (7.53).

Nevertheless, the Syracusans had won a decisive victory at sea, as Thucydides says (7.55.1), nullifying the effects of the naval reinforcements brought by Demosthenes and Eurymedon, and giving them virtually complete command of the Grand Harbour (cf. 7.56.1). Indeed, he claims, they now began to think in terms not just of saving their city but of total victory, and to this end took steps to block the mouth of the Grand Harbour with anchored triremes broadside on, and other smaller craft. They took pride in the thought that it was they who would get the credit for such a victory in the eyes of the world, and Thucydides, as though to show just what this meant, here devotes two whole chapters (7.57 and 58) to a summary of the forces involved.

The Athenians, for their part, seeing the harbour being closed and realizing what the enemy intentions were, held a council of war. Apart from their other difficulties, they now had a supply problem, since they had sent word to Katana to stop sending anything, on the assumption that they were going to withdraw by sea. Now they were unlikely to receive any more unless they could re-establish command at sea. So they decided to abandon their lines on Epipolai, and to

build a cross-wall as close as possible to their ships, allowing sufficient room for their equipment and the sick. This they could defend, but with the rest of their soldiers they would man every ship they had, seaworthy or not, and fight it out at sea. If they won, they would withdraw to Katana; if not, they would burn their ships and march overland to the nearest place they could reach, Greek or native (7.60.1–3).

They immediately put this plan into operation and succeeded in manning 110 ships, sending aboard every man of suitable age and large numbers of archers and javelineers from Akarnania and elsewhere (7.60.4–5). Nikias then addressed them in a speech which, if Thucydides' version is accurate (7.61–4), would have made sad hearing to anyone brought up in the tradition of Phormio and his like. In particular, he apologized for the numerous marines, confessing that they would never have put so many on board for a fight in open waters, but had to do so because they would help in the 'land battle on the ships they were forced to fight' (7.62.2). Since they were forced to fight such a battle, grappling-irons would also be used to prevent either side from backing away (7.62.2–4). This reminds us of Thucydides' scornful description of the battle of Sybota (1.49.1–3), as he no doubt intended.

The Syracusans could, of course, see the Athenian preparations, and were apparently forewarned, presumably by deserters, of their intention to use grappling-irons. To counter this they stretched hides over the bows and upper parts of their ships so that the grappling-irons would slip off (7.65.2). Thucydides also gives Gylippos a speech (7.66–8), in which, among other things, he draws attention to the likelihood that the Akarnanian and other javelineers on the Athenian ships – 'landsmen, so to speak' – would not find it easy to throw their javelins from a sitting position (7.67.2). This implies that javelineers and possibly archers trained to fight at sea would sit to discharge their weapons, presumably because a trireme was an unstable fighting platform. They would stand up to fight once ships grappled, but two triremes grappled side to side would have been relatively stable.¹⁵

In a final, brilliant psychological touch (7.69.2), Thucydides describes how a distraught Nikias, thinking there were still things left undone and unsaid, summoned all the trierarchs one by one, and, addressing them formally by their fathers' names, their own and those of their tribes, exhorted them to live up to their own reputations and those of their forebears. Afraid that even this was not enough, he finally marshalled the men left to him to guard the base along the shore to give those on board as much encouragement as possible (7.69.3), while Demosthenes, Menander and Euthydemos, who were to command at sea, weighed anchor and made straight for the boom across the mouth of the harbour. Meanwhile, the Syracusans, with about the same number of ships as before (i.e. about seventy-six), also put to sea, some to guard the exit from the harbour, the remainder strung out round the rest of it so as to come at the Athenians from all directions. The stage was set for perhaps the most decisive battle of the war.

The first impetus of the Athenian attack carried them through the enemy ships guarding the boom, and they began loosening its fastenings. But then the other Syracusan ships joined in from all directions and the fighting became general throughout the harbour. Thucydides emphasizes that it was a harder fight than any of the previous ones, but despite the best efforts of the helmsmen, because there were so many ships (nearly 200: 7.70.4) crammed in such a confined space, there were few opportunities to ram, backing water (*anakrousis*) and breaking through the enemy line (*diekplous*) being impossible. Instead, accidental collisions were numerous, leading to fierce fights across the decks and much confusion. In other words, this was another old-fashioned battle, in which Athenian skill was nullified, though most ancient sea battles were probably like this.¹⁶ On land, the changing fortunes at sea were mirrored in the conflicting emotions of the thousands watching, even their bodies swaying to-and-fro, as Thucydides describes in another celebrated passage (7.71).

But Athenian morale had been sapped by recent reverses and present dangers. After a long struggle, they broke and the Syracusans and their allies, cheering and shouting, pursued them back to land (7.71.5). Those who were not taken afloat ran for the camp as they came ashore. Some of those on land went to help, others to man the defences (7.71.6), but they were so depressed that they did not give any thought to recovering the dead or the wrecked ships (7.72.2). Demosthenes, who was made of sterner stuff, immediately proposed that they try again, pointing out that they still had more serviceable ships than the enemy – some sixty to fewer than fifty. But this means that they had lost about twice as many as the enemy, and the men refused to re-embark (7.72.3).

This means that there was nothing for it but to try to withdraw by land, but the Syracusans were determined not to allow this without a fight, fearing that the Athenians would simply settle somewhere and renew the war. Hermokrates, in particular, thinking they might try to escape that very night, urged that steps be taken to block their retreat. The victory, however, had coincided with a festival of Herakles, and Hermokrates' fellow-citizens, happily taking time off after so great a struggle, were mostly drunk. So he sent some friends, with a cavalry escort, to feed Nikias information that the roads were already blocked. Since Nikias still had some informants among the Syracusans, Thucydides says (7.73.3), the information appeared plausible. In any case, it might have seemed better to deal with any roadblocks in daylight; and, as it turned out, the retreat did not even start next day. There were preparations to be made, and it is doubtful whether any kind of orderly withdrawal could have been organized the night after the battle. Thus the Syracusans did after all manage to establish roadblocks on likely routes and to guard fords. They also managed to tow away, unhindered, such of the Athenian ships as had not been burned (7.74.2), so that there was no longer any possibility of a withdrawal by sea.

Thucydides paints a harrowing picture of the start of the Athenian retreat, with the dead left unburied and the sick and wounded abandoned to their fate. It was like the fleeing population of a city taken by siege (7.75.5), and no small

city at that, with some 40,000 men taking part. The hoplites and cavalymen even had to carry their own provisions, some through lack of slaves, others because they distrusted them.¹⁷ Worst of all was the blow to their pride (7.75.6–7). Nikias tried to encourage them, in a speech Thucydides records (7.77), but his ineffectiveness is suggested by the description of his voice increasing in volume (7.76).

They marched in a hollow square, Nikias commanding the van, Demosthenes the rear, and the baggage-carriers and other non-combatants in the centre (7.78.2). The first obstacle was the ford over the Anapos, which was guarded by enemy troops, but they managed to break through and the march continued, continually harassed by cavalry and light troops (7.78.3). This obviously slowed them down and they succeeded in marching only about 4½ miles (7 kilometres) that first day (7.78.4). Next day they started early but advanced only just over 2 miles (3.5 kilometres) before camping on some level ground. The reason for this short march was evidently the necessity to forage for food and, particularly, water, but it let the Syracusans block the pass ahead, known as ‘the Akraian rock’ (7.78.4–5).

Unfortunately, we cannot be sure of the direction of the Athenian march at this point, mainly because, whereas Diodoros explicitly states that they were making for Katana (13.18.6), Thucydides is unclear.¹⁸ In Nikias’ speech before the retreat started, he is made to imply that the objective was initially no more than to reach friendly Sikel territory. To this end he says he had sent messengers to them in advance (7.77.6), and later Thucydides implies that the rendezvous was to be somewhere in the valley of the Kakyparis, the modern Cassibile (7.80.5). Since this rises near Palazzolo Acreidae, the ancient Akrai, it is usually thought that the ‘Akraian rock’ lay west of Syracuse. Topographical arguments have been adduced for putting it rather to the northwest, which would fit Diodoros, but in that case it can have had nothing to do with Akrai, and it is difficult to see how the Athenians can later have hoped to rendezvous with the Sikels by marching up the Kakyparis (*loc. cit.*).

In any case, having failed to break through on two successive days, the Athenians fell back to the flatter land below and there made camp. Their only success had been in preventing an attempt to block retreat by the way they had come, and it was symptomatic of their collapsing morale that it was now they, not the Syracusans (cf. 6.70.1), who were dismayed by a thunderstorm, though, as Thucydides says (7.79.3), these often occur in late autumn.

Next day they went forward again, perhaps attempting to bypass the Akraian rock, for Thucydides says they were exposed to attacks from all sides and particularly from the rear (7.79.5). However, although the enemy broke off the engagement after they had succeeded in advancing just over half a mile (less than a kilometre), it was now obvious that they could not go on. So that night Nikias and Demosthenes decided, in time-honoured fashion, to light every fire they could and retreat towards the sea (7.80.1). Whatever their original intention, they now gave up all thought of seeking refuge at Katana, and instead thought of making for somewhere in the region of Gela and Kamarina (7.80.2).¹⁹

There was some confusion due to the natural terrors of a night march through enemy territory, but they made good progress, though the leading detachment, under Nikias, kept better together and got ahead of the larger body, under Demosthenes. Nevertheless, both reached the sea by dawn. Here they met the road from Syracuse to Heloros, intending to follow it until they reached the Kakyparis, and then turn up that into the interior, hoping the Sikels they had sent for would meet them there (7.80.3–5).²⁰ However, at the ford over the Kakyparis they found Syracusan troops building a wall and stockade. They forced their way through, but instead of turning up the Kakyparis as Thucydides says they had intended, they marched on to another river, the Erineos, as their guides advised (7.80.6). The Erineos was either what is now called the Fiume/Fiumara di Noto or the dried-up watercourse called the Cava Mammaledi,²¹ but in either case it is puzzling that the Athenians went on to it instead of following their original plan. It has been suggested that when Thucydides says that ‘their guides told them to go this way’ (7.80.6) he means that they had never intended to go up the Kakyparis,²² but he explicitly says this was their plan earlier (7.80.5). Perhaps they wanted to avoid any further interference from the troops at the Kakyparis ford, even though they had broken through them. The episode is reminiscent, in some ways, of Hasdrubal’s attempts to shake off the Romans before the Metaurus, though he was deserted by his guides.²³

Meanwhile, the first reaction of the Syracusans near the Akraian rock, when they realized at daybreak that the Athenians had gone, was to blame Gylippos. Possibly they were influenced by the view that Spartans were reluctant to force an issue by battle (cf. 5.73.4), but it is more likely that it was the pride they were beginning to feel in their success (cf. 7.56) and natural jealousy of a foreigner. One is reminded of what Polybios says (1.36.2–3) about Xanthippos, another Spartan, after he had helped the Carthaginians defeat Regulus.²⁴ But whatever the feelings of the Syracusans, they swiftly set off in pursuit of the Athenians and caught up with them ‘about lunchtime’ (7.81.1).

Their first contact was with those under Demosthenes’ command, who had never rejoined the others after the night march and were now about 5½ miles (8.8 kilometres) behind Nikias and his men. They were swiftly surrounded by Syracusan cavalry and penned into an olive orchard enclosed by a wall, with a road on both sides, the estate of Polyzelos, according to Plutarch (*Nik.* 27.1). The position was not unlike that of a Corinthian rearguard after a battle near Megara in the early 450s (1.106). Trapped, the Athenians were subjected to a day-long barrage of missiles, the Syracusans preferring this to closing with a desperate enemy, now that victory was so near (7.81.2–5).

At last, when they saw that the Athenians were close to collapse, the Syracusans offered terms, promising freedom first to the islanders in the Athenian ranks, and a few came over. Soon afterwards, terms were agreed for the rest. They were to lay down their arms on condition their lives were spared, now and later, and the remaining 6,000 then surrendered (7.82). Plutarch alleges (*Nik.* 27.2) that Demosthenes tried to commit suicide but was prevented by his captors. Bearing

in mind that Thucydides says Demosthenes' command included rather more than half of those who had started the retreat (7.80.4), in other words more than 20,000 men (cf. 7.75.5), the losses they had suffered on the march had been appalling.²⁵

Meanwhile, Nikias and his men had crossed the Erineos, camping on some high ground beyond it, and here, next day, the pursuit also caught up with them. Informing Nikias that Demosthenes and his men had surrendered, the Syracusans offered the same terms, but he refused to believe them. Even when the news was confirmed by one of his own cavalymen, sent to find out under truce, he still refused to surrender. Instead, on behalf of the Athenian state, he offered to reimburse Syracuse the total cost of the war, one Athenian to be hostage for each talent, if his army were allowed to go.²⁶ This somewhat unrealistic offer was naturally rejected by the Syracusans, who, instead, launched a full-scale attack. The Athenians managed to hold out all day, and when night fell tried to escape under cover of darkness. But they were detected and abandoned the attempt when the enemy broke into their war-chant, though about 300 of them managed to break through the surrounding pickets and make off where they could (7.83).

Next day, Nikias continued the retreat, pressing on to the River Assinaros (probably the Fiumare di Noto),²⁷ under a barrage of missiles from all sides. But once they reached the river, their splendid discipline finally cracked, each man wanting to be the first across and all being desperately thirsty. Soon a milling mass was trapped in the river bed, some trampling on their comrades, some falling on their own spears, others being swept away by the current, while Syracusan troops lining the steep, farther bank poured missiles into them (7.84). Finally, with the dead piled high in the river and the few who got out cut down by the enemy cavalry, Nikias surrendered to Gylippos, trusting him more than the Syracusans and telling him to do what he liked with himself but stop the slaughter of his soldiers. Gylippos then gave orders to take prisoners, and the 300 who had escaped the previous night were also rounded up. Thucydides gives no number for the prisoners taken from this detachment, though he later implies that it was about 1,000 (cf. 7.87.4). He also stresses that many had been killed on the march, but that nevertheless many escaped either now or after being enslaved and made their way to Katana (7.85).

The various groups of Syracusans now reassembled and escorted the prisoners and booty back to the city. Most of the prisoners were put in the quarries, but Nikias and Demosthenes were executed, against Gylippos' wishes; he wanted to take them back to Sparta, particularly Demosthenes.²⁸ Nikias owed his fate partly to his Syracusan informants, who feared that he might reveal their treachery under torture, partly to the fears of the Corinthians and others that he might use his known wealth to secure his release. Thucydides' judgement that of all the Greeks of his time he least deserved such a fate 'because he had ordered his whole life by high moral standards'²⁹ is well known. Presumably he meant that, despite his military failings, Nikias was a decent man who did not deserve

to be executed like this. It is worth noting, too, that Demosthenes' execution was contrary to the terms of his surrender, though Thucydides does not say so. Those who were imprisoned in the quarries suffered considerably from overcrowding, disease, lack of food and water, and from the change from the summer's heat to the cold nights of autumn. Many died, but after ten weeks those who were not from Athens, Sicily or Italy were sold, while the others lingered on for eight months before also being sold (7.87.1–5).

So ended the Sicilian expedition, the most important event in the whole war, and, indeed, in Greek history, in Thucydides' view (7.87.5). The disaster was total, as he emphasizes in what, for him, seems almost hysterical language (7.87.6), and one is compelled to ask why.

The basic reason is that the Athenians had almost certainly bitten off more than they could chew, despite what Thucydides himself perhaps came to believe (2.65.11). Syracuse was a big city, with a large population, and such places were notoriously difficult to take in antiquity, even after the invention of the catapult. The Romans spent two years on the siege of Syracuse itself in the second Punic War, and then succeeded in the end only through treachery, and it took them over three years to capture Carthage in the third, despite their then overwhelming superiority. Even if the Athenians had had the support of most of Sicily, one wonders whether they would have succeeded, and they never did. In the end, only Katana gave them any real support, apart from some of the Sikels, and even their nominal ally Egesta proved a broken reed. All the other important cities of the island sooner or later sided with Syracuse, and significant support also came to her from mainland Greece.

Second, the Athenians did not really go about the task in the best way. It is astonishing that no attempt was ever made to storm the city. The only time the Athenian forces penetrated any part of its defences was when a few got into Temenites on the heels of those they had driven from the second Syracusan counter-wall, only to be immediately expelled (6.100.2). Yet the siege of Plataia, albeit on a much smaller scale, shows that some at least of the traditional siege techniques of antiquity were known to the Greeks – the siege-mound (2.75), battering-rams (2.76.4) and even primitive flame-throwers (4.100; cf. 2.77.2ff.); only the catapult had not yet been invented.

The Athenians themselves had used some kinds of siege-engine (*mêchanai*: 2.58.1) against Poteidaia in 430, and Nikias something of the sort (cf. 3.51.3) from his ships, at Minoa in 427. Even if these were no more than scaling-ladders, they could have been used at Syracuse. As it is, it is ironic that the only 'siege-engines' mentioned in Thucydides' account of the siege are those Nikias burned to delay an attack on 'the circle' (6.102.2), and those Demosthenes attempted to use on the third Syracusan counter-wall, which were burned by the enemy before being put into place (7.43.1).

Third, even if we allow that circumvallation was probably the best way to take Syracuse, the Athenians made a mess of it. Building the lines down to the Grand

Harbour should have taken second place to pushing the ones northwards from 'the circle' to the sea at Trogilos. It was much easier for supplies and reinforcements to reach the city via the northern part of Epipolai, which was out of sight of 'the circle' (cf. 7.3.4), than between 'the circle' and the Grand Harbour. While the lines were still single, they would have been vulnerable to attack from outside, but that would have been better than nothing: the vital, third Syracusan counter-wall was single (7.4.1 and 42.4). Nor should Nikias have given up on the lines, to fortify Plemmyrion and concern himself with the war at sea, as he apparently did after Gylippos' arrival (cf. 7.4.4). The completion of the lines should have come first.

Fourth, the Athenians made poor use of their splendid fleet. It is sad to read Nikias' letter, for example, with its talk of rotting timbers (7.12.3) and deteriorating crews (7.13.2), and sadder still to see the Athenians having to conform to enemy tactics – tactics they had previously despised (cf., especially, 7.62 and 70.4ff.). They should never have allowed their ships to be bottled up in the Grand Harbour, where their speed and manoeuvrability were no use, leaving the Syracusans in effective control of the open sea (cf. 7.36.6). Demosthenes seems to have realized this, though he had had no experience at sea (cf. 7.49.2), and Nikias, too, is said to have thought Plemmyrion a better base (7.4.4). It had its disadvantages, mainly ones of supply (7.4.6), but these could have been largely overcome by a more aggressive use of the Athenian cavalry, which only once puts in an appearance (7.51.2) after its first showing (6.98). Some thought should also have been given to eliminating the Syracusan strong-point at the Olympieion before it became a menace (6.70.4, 75.1 and 7.4.6).

The fleet had to play its part in blockading Syracuse and this necessarily cramped its freedom of manoeuvre, but more could have been done to play to its strengths. If the Syracusans could construct a boom across the entrance to the Grand Harbour (7.59.3), why could the Athenians not have done so earlier? They had more warships than the enemy, and they also had merchantmen, like their opponents (7.4.5 and 41.2). This would have meant that they only really had to watch the smaller harbour on the other side of the city. From what Thucydides says (7.22.1–2 and 25.5), it appears that this was the main Syracusan naval base, not the Grand Harbour. Originally there were forty-five triremes there, and that is where the dockyard (*neôrion*) was, whereas there were only thirty-five and 'old ship-houses' (*palaîôn neosoikôn*) in the Grand Harbour. Blocking the Grand Harbour and keeping a close watch on the smaller one from Plemmyrion (cf. 7.4.4) might have prevented the arrival of enemy reinforcements by sea. As it was, not only did Gongylos arrive safely with his single ship (7.2.1), but so later did twelve others (7.7.1), though Nikias had sent out twenty to look for them (7.4.7). All these presumably made their way to the smaller harbour.

The Athenians could also have tried to eliminate the Syracusan fleet at an early stage. Much ingenuity was later spent on trying to destroy the stakes protecting the enemy warships in the Grand Harbour (7.25.5–8), but Thucydides implies that these had only recently been planted, and what about fire-ships?

The Syracusans used one later (7.53.4). As for the more important, smaller harbour, it may have been better guarded than the Peiraieus was in 429, when the Peloponnesians contemplated attacking it (2.93–4), but a bold, surprise attack early on might have succeeded, as did Teleutias' attack on the Peiraieus in 388 (Xen., *Hell.* 5.1.19–23). By establishing complete command at sea from the first, the Athenians could have freed the better part of their fleet for raiding other parts of Sicily and Italy, bringing pressure to bear on the many neutral states waiting to see which way the wind blew. As it was, most of the fleet literally rotted away, failing even to do the job of blockading properly and ultimately failing in its main job, defeating the enemy navy.

In the end, the Athenians owed their defeat to a failure of leadership, and there can be no doubt that Nikias was chiefly to blame, though one should make due allowance for his reluctance to take the job in the first place and later for his ill-health. He was right to argue against the expedition at the outset, and once it had become apparent that the Athenians had been misled by the Egestaians, his proposal that after making a show of helping them against Selinous and demonstrating elsewhere they should go home had much to recommend it. It is even possible that the operations in western Sicily after Alkibiades' departure (6.62) represented a reversion to this plan. But if Syracuse had now become the main objective, it was silly to waste the summer on what had essentially become a side-issue, and then land near Syracuse, win a battle and sail away, 'because it was now winter and it did not yet appear possible to wage war from there' (6.71.2). All this did was galvanize resistance (6.63 and 72ff.), and lack of cavalry was no excuse (6.71.2). If cavalry was going to be necessary, steps should have been taken to acquire some. It was not that difficult: most of the 650 cavalry eventually mustered, and all the horses, bar the 30 they had brought with them, came from Sicily (6.98.1).

When the siege finally began, after the initial success in occupying Epipolai, the work of circumvallation does not seem to have been marked by any real appreciation of the priorities, as we have seen (above, p. 151), and Nikias must also bear a heavy responsibility for the final disaster. As long as he could, he resisted Demosthenes' clearly sensible view that withdrawal was the correct option, and then allowed superstition to stand in its way. Thucydides may be right that he did not deserve to die as he did, but he certainly did not deserve well of his fellow-citizens.³⁰

But perhaps it is those very citizens who should take most of the blame. They were stupid and greedy in deciding on the expedition in the first place (cf. 6.1 and 24.3–4), and in adhering to the decision after Nikias' perfectly sensible arguments against it (6.9–14). They were, perhaps, even sillier to put in command a man who was against the enterprise, even if they regarded him as a safe pair of hands (cf. 6.24.2). One is reminded of Philip II of Spain's decision to appoint Medina Sidonia to the command of a later armada. The Athenians should certainly have relieved Nikias of his command after receiving his letter in the winter of 414/13, not only on the grounds of ill-health, but because of his patently

defeatist attitude. They were arguably wrong to send reinforcements rather than cutting their losses. It is a well-known military principle that one should not reinforce failure.

One would like to know what the average Athenian made of Nikias' views on their likely response to the home truths he told them (cf. 7.14.4), but things had clearly come to a pretty pass if Athenian commanders feared to send home accurate reports because they might not make pleasant hearing (7.8.2 and 14.4). For his part, Nikias declared, he was 'unwilling to be put to death on a disgraceful charge, rather than risk dying at the hands of the enemy, if necessary, by his own choice' (7.8.4).

A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR

While the campaign in Sicily was still in progress, mainland Greece had gradually slipped back into war. It may seem odd to us that Athenians and Spartans could face each other in battle, as they had done at Mantinea, without there apparently being a state of war between them, but this was the case. Odder still, the Spartans had evidently not even regarded raids on their own territory as a *casus belli*, two years later, merely issuing a proclamation that their allies could make retaliatory raids (5.115.2).

In Thucydides' view, the first open breach came only in the summer of 414, when Athenian ships sent to aid Argos raided Epidaurus, Limera, Prasiai and other places in Spartan territory. This, he says (6.105.2), 'gave the Spartans a more plausible reason for defending themselves against the Athenians'. Later he amplifies this in explaining the Spartan decision to invade Attica again and fortify Dekeleia. They thought the Athenians would be easier to defeat now that they had a double war on their hands, against themselves and the Sicilians, and 'because it was the Athenians who had first broken the peace, whereas, in the previous war, the fault had been theirs'. This was because the Thebans had then attacked Plataia in time of peace, and because the Spartans themselves had refused the Athenian offer of arbitration. Now it was the Athenians who were refusing arbitration (7.18.2–3).

Thus, early in 413, the Spartans had invaded Attica once more, and, having ravaged the plain round Athens, fortified Dekeleia. The effects were devastating. Previous invasions had come and gone, but this was a permanent threat, denying the Athenians the use of their farmland and forcing them to import supplies by the longer route round Cape Sounion, instead of via Euboea and Oropos. It also led to the desertion of more than 20,000 slaves, the majority skilled workers, and to severe financial problems (7.27.2–28).¹ The Athenian response had been to send thirty ships to raid Lakonia. These had been joined by Demosthenes and his fleet on their way to Sicily, as we have seen, and the combined force had not only again raided Epidaurus, Limera, but had landed in Lakonia itself and fortified 'a sort of isthmus', as a refuge for deserting helots and a base for raids (7.26.2). The site is not certain, but was either Onugnathos itself (now Elafónisos) or the peninsula which projects southeast from it.²

But, though the Spartan presence at Dekeleia was a constant reminder that war had broken out again, the main conflict was far away in Sicily, and when rumours of the disaster there reached Athens people at first refused to believe them. Plutarch (*Nik.* 30) says the first news came from a foreigner chatting in a Peiraeus barber's shop, as though everyone knew all about it, and even when they received information from some of their own men who had escaped, Thucydides claims (8.1.1), the Athenians still refused to believe it.

When the news sank in, one of the first reactions was to blame democracy itself, and the assembly was persuaded to set up a board of older men to take a preliminary look at issues as they arose (8.1.3). Innocuous as this may sound, such preliminary discussion was normally the job of the council of Five Hundred, and although that body was not abolished, the very title of the new 'pre-councillors' (*probouloi*: cf. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, lines 421 and 467; *AP* 29.2) had, for Greeks, an oligarchic ring (cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1298b29, etc.). This is, indeed, the first hint of the reaction against democracy which was to bring about its overthrow the following year, though this does not mean that the *probouloi* were themselves oligarchically inclined. One of them was the tragedian Sophokles, now over eighty years old (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1419a25).

In some respects the Athenians were too alarmist, but, although visions of the Sicilian fleet immediately descending on the Peiraeus (8.1.2) were absurd, there is no doubt that the situation had completely changed. Above all, the Athenians had lost their unchallengeable supremacy at sea. It was not just a matter of the actual losses in ships (cf. 8.1.2); there was also the lack of trained crews, the importance of which had been emphasized in Nikias' letter (7.13.2). It is clear, too, from hints in Thucydides (cf. 6.68.2, 7.5.3, 13.2, 20.2 and 82.1) that many of the huge number of men required were by now drawn from Athens' allies, and, for various reasons, might no longer be available.

Loss of supremacy at sea meant, first, that the Athenians' enemies were at last encouraged to challenge them there. The Spartans hoped that the coming of spring would see the arrival of their Sicilian allies (8.2.3). In the meantime, while King Agis, commanding at Dekeleia, set about extorting funds from the area round the Gulf of Malis (8.3.1), they ordered the building of 100 triremes by their allies in Greece (8.3.2). Agis' activities may also have had a wider purpose. The Spartans had lost control of Herakleia in 420/19 (5.51–52.1), but had recovered it by 409 (Xen., *Hell.* 1.2.18). Its recovery may have been the king's doing, and he may have been thinking of reopening the land route to Chalkidike and Thrace which Brasidas had exploited. But, if so, nothing came of it.³

Even if Agis had no such ambitious plans, the weakening of Athenian sea power now certainly encouraged their allies to revolt. The extent of opposition in the alliance is controversial,⁴ but there can be no doubt that there had always been some. Now opponents will have been encouraged to voice their opposition and floating voters will have been more inclined to listen. The first to put out feelers were, surprisingly, the Euboians, whose proximity to Attica might

have been expected to keep them loyal. But the Spartan presence at Dekeleia will have been comforting, and it was to Agis there that their representatives went. He welcomed what they had to say, and summoned help from Sparta, but by the time this arrived, representatives had also come from Lesbos, and Agis decided to send help there instead (8.5.1–2). Thucydides comments (8.5.3) that Agis acted without the authority of the Spartan state, since, while at Dekeleia, he was empowered to do so, and this is a reminder of the almost absolute authority a Spartan king enjoyed in the field (cf. 5.60.2).

One would like to know why he preferred Lesbos to Euboia. A successful revolt in the latter would have had a damaging effect on Athenian supplies. Sheep and cattle from Attica had been placed there for safe-keeping in 431 (2.14), and although they had presumably been brought back at least in 421, if not in 425, they had probably been sent there again when the Spartans occupied Dekeleia. Certainly the island was now a source of supply for the Athenians (7.28.1), and Thucydides notes how vital they felt it to be (8.1.3).

On the other hand, Lesbos was one of the largest islands in the Athenian alliance, one of its cities, Methymna, still supplying ships (6.85.2, 7.57.5), and it also lay near the Hellespont, the Athenians' lifeline to the Black Sea. It was to play an important part in the war, particularly in the campaign that culminated at Arginousai, and Agis was possibly already thinking along the strategic lines the Spartans were later to follow. More ominous still for the Athenians, perhaps, was the threat of revolt by Chios and Erythrai (8.5.4). Not only were the Chians the last allies, apart from the Methymnaians, to have a fleet of their own, but they and the Erythraians were Ionians, traditionally supposed to be of the same stock as the Athenians and therefore on their side (cf., e.g., 7.57.4).

Nor was this all. The envoys from these people to Sparta were accompanied by one from Tissaphernes, who is described by Thucydides as 'general of those below' (*stratêgos . . . tôn katô*: 8.5.4), and was probably in overall command of western Asia Minor for the king of Persia.⁵ Through his envoy, Tissaphernes urged the Peloponnesians to intervene in the eastern Aegean and offered to maintain their forces. The king had recently raised the matter of the arrears of tribute from the Greek cities there which had been ruled by Persia before becoming allies of the Athenians after the defeat of Xerxes' invasion of Greece, and the Spartans could also help in dealing with the Karian rebel Amorges (8.5.5). At about the same time, envoys came from Pharnabazos, governor of northwest Asia Minor, urging the Spartans to send forces to the Hellespont, and also offering to maintain them, for similar reasons (8.6.1).

Historians are divided on whether this intervention by Persia was due to Athenian support for Amorges or whether it was the other way round.⁶ Ultimately, however, like the first stirrings of revolt among Athens' allies, it was probably prompted by Persian perceptions of the weakening of Athenian sea power.⁷ If the Athenians did support Amorges without Persian provocation, it was sheer folly, as Andokides argues (3.29). But Andokides is not the most reliable source, and although Thucydides certainly implies Athenian support for Amorges later

(cf. 8.28.2 and 54.3), he equally certainly does not imply it in his account of Tissaphernes' original approach to the Spartans.

Whatever the truth here, the Spartans were now faced with something of an *embarras de choix* (cf. 8.6.2). In the first instance, however, they were strongly inclined to help Chios and Tissaphernes. This was Alkibiades' advice and he had an influential friend in the ephor, Endios (8.6.3). But another consideration, perhaps, was that there was as yet nothing comparable to the Chians' sixty ships in the Hellespontine region. The Spartans took the precaution of sending the *perioikos*, Phrynīs, to check the Chian claims (8.6.4) – an interesting example of the status that leading *perioikoi* could enjoy – and as a result of his report, they concluded an alliance with the Chians and Erythraians. They also voted to send forty ships, ten immediately, and though in the event, after an earthquake, only five were sent, it was a start.

By the beginning of the summer of 412, the Peloponnesians already had 39 triremes in the Corinthian Gulf, and at Chian urging Spartan officers were sent to supervise dragging these across the Isthmus (8.7). Meanwhile, delegates of the Spartans and their allies met at Corinth to decide future strategy. Here it was resolved, first, to send Chalkideus to Chios with five ships being fitted out in Lakonia; second, to send a squadron to Lesbos under Alkamenēs; and then, finally, to send one to the Hellespont under Klearchos (8.8.2). To begin with, only half the ships were to be brought across the Isthmus, and these were to be despatched immediately, to divide Athenian attention (8.8.3).

Here it is interesting to see how early the Spartans and their allies seem to have realized the importance of the Hellespont. In the end, it was to be Lysander's cutting of their supply-line through these waters that brought the Athenians to their knees, and from the summer of the following year the focus of the war increasingly shifted to the northern Aegean and the Hellespontine region. The Spartans were evidently not only now encouraged to try to match the Athenians at sea, but very rapidly saw how best to use sea power against them.

Implementation of the decisions taken at Corinth was first delayed by the Isthmian festival. The Corinthians, in whose territory the festival was celebrated, were reluctant to participate in any operations until it was over, even though King Agis offered to take responsibility. Meanwhile, the Athenians got wind of what was happening on Chios and sent a general to investigate. When the Chians denied everything, they were told to prove their loyalty by sending ships to join the Athenian fleet, and since the anti-Athenians were unwilling to antagonize the people until they were certain of Peloponnesian support, seven ships were duly sent (8.9).

The situation became much clearer to the Athenians when they took advantage of the usual truce to attend the Isthmian festival, and they took immediate steps to prevent any enemy ships leaving Kenchreai, the Corinthian port on the Saronic Gulf, without their knowledge. Eventually, when twenty-one ships did set sail under Alkamenēs, they sent out a similar number which at first tried to draw the enemy into open water. This implies that the Athenians still assumed

they had the faster and more manoeuvrable ships, and that at Syracuse it had only been the conditions that had led to their defeat. But the enemy, refusing to be drawn, turned back, and the Athenians also withdrew, distrusting the Chians who formed a third of their fleet. Later, however, with seventeen more ships, they managed to drive the enemy into an uninhabited haven on the Corinthian coast near the border with Epidauros, probably called, confusingly, Peiraios (now, perhaps, Frangolimáni).⁸ One Peloponnesian ship was lost outside and the Athenians managed to force ashore and disable most of the others, killing Alkamenes himself (8.10). Establishing a base on a nearby island, they left enough ships to keep watch, and sent for reinforcements when they realized enemy land forces had arrived (8.10–11.3).

News of this at first delayed the departure of Chalkideus from Lakonia, but Alkibiades, through his friend Endios, was able to persuade the other ephors to order his departure, and, being now at odds with King Agis, went with him (8.12). It is uncertain whether his quarrel with Agis was over his alleged affair with the king's wife Timaiia, but even if he was not the real father of Agis' son Leotychidas, there is no reason to doubt the adultery.⁹

The arrival of Alkibiades and Chalkideus at Chios brought about the first revolts against Athenian rule since those in Thrace. They had taken prisoner all they met on their way to keep their arrival secret, but released them when they put in at Korykos (now Koraka Burun), the headland at the south end of the Çeşme peninsula, which is out of sight of the city of Chios. Here they made contact with some of their Chian supporters, and, at their urging, made straight for the city, without announcing their arrival. Their supporters had arranged a meeting of the council, at which Chalkideus and Alkibiades promised that more ships were on their way, but said nothing of the débâcle at Peiraios. This was enough to persuade first the Chians, then the people of Erythrai (now Ildır) and Klazomenai (now Çesmealtı) to revolt (8.14). The coup was typical of Alkibiades and his approach to war.

When the news reached Athens, the response was resolute. The assembly voted to use the special reserve of 1,000 talents set aside at the beginning of the war (2.24.1), and to man as many ships as possible. Twenty ships were withdrawn from the squadron blockading Peiraios and sent off to Samos, twelve immediately under Strombichides, eight later under Thrasykles. The seven Chian ships taking part in the blockade were withdrawn, their slave oarsmen being freed, their Chian crews imprisoned. They were replaced by ten fresh Athenian ships, and plans were laid to man thirty more (8.15).¹⁰

But the Athenian fleet in the eastern Aegean was still outnumbered, and though Strombichides sailed immediately for Teos on hearing it was under threat, he could do nothing but return to Samos in the face of Chalkideus' twenty-three ships. This induced the Teians to admit some Erythraians and Klazomenians who had come to support Chalkideus. With help from troops sent by Tissaphernes, they demolished the fortifications facing the mainland which the Athenians had built (8.16). This meant that they were now susceptible to Persian and, indeed,



Map 11 Western Asia Minor

Spartan pressure, but later, under threat from another Athenian squadron, they at least agreed to admit the Athenians to their town on the same terms as their enemies (8.20.2). Meanwhile, Chalkideus and Alkibiades armed the crews of the ships they had brought from Lakonia (probably mainly helot oarsmen), and

replaced them with Chians. Then, after manning an additional twenty ships, they sailed for Miletos. Here they successfully engineered another revolt, just before the arrival of Strombichides and his colleague Thrasykles, who had lately arrived with twelve more ships (8.17.1–3).

At this point Thucydides gives us the text of what purports to be the first treaty between Persia and the Spartans (8.18). There is some doubt about its authenticity, because it lacks the formality of even the second treaty (8.37), let alone the third (8.58), and the Spartans seem to get so little from it. Views range from outright rejection to complete acceptance,¹¹ and perhaps it does not matter much since, even if authentic, it was soon superseded. But Thucydides says Alkibiades was quick to bring about the revolt of Miletos before anyone else could get the credit (8.17.2), and this may have been sufficient motive for concluding a preliminary agreement with Persia, however unsatisfactory.¹²

Soon after the conclusion of the treaty, the Chians sent ten of their ships to Anaia, on the coast opposite Samos. They hoped to learn what was happening at Miletos, which was now blockaded by an Athenian squadron based on Lade, and to raise further revolts in the area. However, when they were warned by Chalkideus to leave and heard that Amorges was approaching to help the Athenians, they withdrew to a small town between Lebedos (now Gümüldür) and Kolophon (Degimendere), known as ‘Zeus’ temple’. But here they spotted sixteen Athenian ships and immediately fled, one ship to Ephesos, the rest to Teos. The Athenians captured four of the latter, though their crews managed to escape. The Chians were undeterred, however, and when the Athenians withdrew to Samos, they brought about the revolt of Lebedos and then Hairai, just west of Teos itself (8.19), with the aid of the Erythraians and Klazomenians then at Teos (cf. 8.16.1). Meanwhile, the twenty Peloponnesian ships blockaded at Peiraios managed to force their way out, taking four of the blockading ships, and escaping to Kenchreai, where they prepared to sail for Ionia under the new Spartan navarch, Astyochos (8.20.1). This was the first time Peloponnesian warships were prepared to fight on equal terms, unless they had to, and says something for their growing confidence.

At about this time there was a revolution on the island of Samos, assisted by the presence there of three Athenian warships. Thucydides’ language implies that the previous regime had been an oligarchy of landowners, and one wonders when it came to power. Athens’ imposition of democracy had caused the revolt of 440/39 (cf. 1.115.3), and it is a natural assumption that democracy was reimposed after the crushing of the revolt. However, the Athenians may have changed their minds as a result of it, and it seems likely that the oligarchy had been in power for some time before 412.¹³ Now the democrats massacred some 200 oligarchs and exiled a further 400, sharing their lands and houses among themselves, and disenfranchising the rest. The grateful Athenians granted autonomy to the Samians, and whatever precisely this may have meant,¹⁴ they repaid them by remaining loyal even after Aigospotamoi.

Elsewhere, however, revolts continued. First the Chians sent thirteen ships to

Lesbos under the *perioikos*, Deiniadas, possibly the only man of his status to hold such a command,¹⁵ while Peloponnesian, Erythraian and Klazomenian troops advanced up the coast towards Kyme, under the Spartan Eualas. It was probably now that Phokaia (Foça) and Kyme (Namurt Limani) came over to the Spartans (cf. 8.31.3–4), though Thucydides does not say so. Deiniadas succeeded in winning over Methymna, and then, leaving four ships there, sailed for Mytilene, where he was also successful (8.22). But the Athenian response was rapid. Twenty-five ships arrived unexpectedly at Mytilene, defeated the Chian ships in the harbour, and recovered control of the city.

Astyochos, the new Spartan navarch, who had recently reached Lesbos with five ships, heard this news at Eresos, where he was joined by three of the Chian ships from Methymna, the fourth having been captured. He sent his marines along the coast by way of Antissa, to help Methymna, accompanying them with his fleet. But then, seeing the way things were going on Lesbos in general, he thought better of it and withdrew to Chios, where he was joined by six more ships from the Peloponnese, and Eualas also retreated. The Athenians, after restoring the situation on Lesbos, then recovered Klazomenai (8.23).

They also hit back elsewhere. First the squadron blockading Miletos landed in Milesian territory and killed the Spartan Chalkideus in a sortie. Then, under Diomedon and Leon, they began to harry Chios from various bases off its east coast, and from Lesbos. Landing at Boliskos (now Volissós) and Kardamyle (Kardhámila), they defeated the Chians who came to meet them and won over the two towns. They then went on to win further victories at Phanai, at the southern tip of the island, and at Leukonion, probably on the east coast, south of the main city (8.24.1–3). The Chians were so dismayed that they were no longer prepared to take the field, and there was even talk of reverting to the Athenian side. The chief officials, however, brought in Astyochos with four ships from Erythrai, and he put paid to the plot by taking hostages from those under suspicion (8.24.3–6).

In autumn 412 substantial Athenian reinforcements arrived at Samos and went straight to Miletos. They consisted of 3,000 hoplites from Athens, Argos and other Athenian allies, and a further 500 Argive light troops armed as hoplites by the Athenians, all borne on 48 ships, some of them transports (8.25.1). Soon after their arrival, the defenders of Miletos made a sortie in force, with Milesian hoplites, Chalkideus' Peloponnesian troops, and mercenaries and cavalry led by Tissaphernes himself. The Argives on the Athenian left, despising the Milesians as Ionians, charged in some disarray and were soundly defeated. But the Athenians on the right drove back the Peloponnesians, Tissaphernes' troops and what Thucydides scornfully calls 'the rest of the mob' (8.25.4). Pushing on to the very walls of the city, they grounded arms, without having come into contact with the Milesians, who had retired to the city on seeing the rout of their left. After their victory, the Athenians began to construct lines to cut Miletos off from the mainland, thinking that if they could recover control of this city, they would have little difficulty elsewhere.

Late that afternoon, however, they heard that no fewer than 55 enemy triremes were in the offing, 20 from Syracuse, commanded by Hermokrates, 2 from Selinous and the rest from the Peloponnese, with the Spartan Therimenes in overall command. They put in first at Leros, some 40 miles (64 kilometres) southwest of Miletos, but, hearing that the Athenians were besieging the latter, made for Teichioussa (perhaps the modern Kazıklı),¹⁶ in the Gulf of Iasos, where they were met by Alkibiades. Having taken part in the battle, he had ridden over from Miletos and now urged them to go to its aid as soon as possible (8.26).

This they agreed to do at dawn (8.27.1), but they need not have bothered, for by the time they reached Miletos next day, the Athenians had withdrawn to Samos. According to Thucydides (8.27), the *stratēgos* Phrynichos was principally responsible for this decision, his main argument being that the overall Athenian situation did not justify the risk of battle (8.27.3), and many have agreed with Thucydides that he was right. But the odds against the Athenians were negligible. Assuming both fleets could have been joined by the ships already at Miletos, Therimenes would have had eighty, Phrynichos and his colleagues sixty-eight. Admittedly some of the Athenian ships were transports (8.25.1), but, as we have seen, these were essentially the same as fighting ships and could have taken their place in the line of battle. On the enemy side, the Syracusans had had recent battle experience, but not in the open sea, and one wonders whether their ships had been restored to their normal condition after the modifications carried out before the fights in the Grand Harbour. There was a further consequence of the Athenian withdrawal. After the return to Samos, the Argives went home, 'in anger at what had happened' (8.27.6),¹⁷ perhaps because they had hoped to get the chance to avenge their defeat at Milesian hands. What Thucydides does not say is that this was the last time the Argives played an active part on the Athenian side in the war.

Spartan confidence that Miletos was now safe was shown by Therimenes' actions. He remained there only one day, and then, adding the twenty-five ships there to his fleet, returned to Teichioussa to retrieve the masts and sails he had left there in anticipation of a battle (8.28.1). Here he was persuaded by Tissaphernes to sail to Iasos, which was occupied by the rebel Amorges. Their sudden assault took Iasos by surprise, its inhabitants never having imagined that any ships would not be Athenian. Amorges himself was captured and handed over to Tissaphernes, as was the city and its people, free and slave, for one daric (twenty *drachmai*) a head. Therimenes and his men also captured considerable booty, and took over Amorges' mercenaries, most of whom were Peloponnesians (8.28.4). On their return to Miletos, the mercenaries were put under the Spartan Pedaritos, who had been sent out to take command on Chios, and was now sent to Erythrai by land (8.28.6).

After garrisoning Iasos, Tissaphernes went to Miletos where he finally handed over enough cash to pay Therimenes' sailors a month's wages. The rate was one Attic *drachma* per day per man, but it was proposed to halve this in future, unless the Persian king ordered otherwise (8.29.1). At this Hermokrates protested, and

though Therimenes, who was waiting to hand over command to Astyochos, gave him no support, it was eventually agreed to pay a small additional sum to each man.¹⁸ It is noticeable that Alkibiades apparently played no part in these negotiations, though one might have expected him to, and it is possible that he had already gone to join Tissaphernes' entourage. But Thucydides certainly does not say so.¹⁹

The Athenians, who had been joined by thirty-five more triremes, now brought all their ships together at Samos. They intended to divide the fleet, the larger part to blockade Miletos, the smaller to attack Chios, and they drew lots to decide who should take charge in each theatre. This is a striking illustration of how different ancient warfare often was from our own. But it was not unprecedented, even in this war (cf. 6.42.1 and 62.1), and we should remember that Athenian *stratēgoi* were all equal, and that they were accustomed to the use of the lot in choosing civilian officials. In this case, three of them took thirty warships and some transports to Chios, while Phrynichos and the others retained seventy-four at Samos to watch Miletos. This probably means that some twenty ships had returned to Athens for various reasons.²⁰

Meanwhile, Astyochos had been at Chios taking hostages, and now put to sea with ten Peloponnesian and ten Chian ships. He first unsuccessfully attacked Pteleon, an Athenian base on the Çeşme peninsula, and then, helped by a local Persian officer, tried to coerce Klazomenai into revolt, again without success. Strong winds then scattered his fleet, he himself making for Phokaia and Kyme, the rest of his squadron to islands off Klazomenai, which they comprehensively plundered. They then sailed to join Astyochos (8.31). He also received an approach from Lesbos, suggesting a renewed attempt to raise the island, but although he was prepared to help, his Corinthian and other allies were wary because of the previous failure. So he returned to Chios, and was joined there by Pedaritos, who had come overland to Erythrai and thence made the short sea crossing to Chios. When a second delegation arrived from Lesbos, Pedaritos urged Astyochos to back him in sending help to the island, but was opposed not only by him but by the Chians (8.32).

Astyochos now finally decided to make for Miletos with ten of his ships, and there take up command of the main fleet, petulantly telling the Chians that they would get no further help from him (8.33.1). On his way to Miletos, he put in at Korykos for the night, and it so happened that the thirty Athenian ships making for Chios put in on the other side of the headland, neither squadron being aware of the other's presence. But during the night Astyochos received a message from Pedaritos, who had presumably been told where he intended to overnight. This informed him that some Erythraian prisoners had arrived at Erythrai from Samos, having been released on the understanding that they would betray Erythrai to the Athenians. Astyochos immediately made for Erythrai, thus avoiding the Athenian squadron, and was joined there by Pedaritos. However, on enquiry, they found that the plot to betray Erythrai was a ruse to secure the release of the prisoners. They therefore acquitted them of the charges, and while

Pedaritos returned to Chios, Astyochos resumed his voyage to Miletos (8.33). Although nothing came of it, the episode illustrates the atmosphere of suspicion which was now prevalent throughout the Aegean.

Meanwhile, the Athenian squadron which had so nearly caught Astyochos off Korykos encountered three Chian ships off Arginos (Ak Burun) and gave chase. A storm blew up, however, and although the three Chian ships made it safely to harbour, the leading three Athenian ships were driven ashore near Chios city and their crews killed or captured. The others managed to reach Phoinikous, a harbour somewhere on the nearby Çeşme peninsula,²¹ and thence went on to Lesbos (8.34).

At about the same time, still during the winter of 412/11, a further twelve ships arrived from the Peloponnese, ten from Thouria, one from Sparta and one from Syracuse, under the Spartan Hippokrates. The squadron put in at Knidos, which had already revolted under Tissaphernes' influence, and there received orders from Miletos that half its ships should remain there, the others take station off Cape Triopion (now Iskandil Burun) to watch for merchantmen coming from Egypt (8.35.1–2). At this time Knidos was situated at the modern Datça, about halfway along the south coast of the peninsula (now Resadiye Yarımadası), not at its western tip, which is where the Hellenistic city lay and where the most conspicuous remains are now to be seen.²²

Hearing of events at Knidos, the Athenians sent ships from Samos to deal with the situation. They captured the six enemy vessels at Triopion, though their crews escaped, and then, putting in at Knidos, almost succeeded in taking it, since it was unfortified. Failing again next day, because the Knidians had erected better defences during the night and been joined by the crews of the six ships taken off Triopion, the Athenians returned to Samos, after ravaging Knidian territory (8.35.3–4).

After Astyochos had finally reached Miletos, and while Therimenes was still there, a second treaty was concluded with Tissaphernes, if Thucydides is to be believed. He says (8.36) that, although the Spartan fleet's financial situation was still reasonably good, the Peloponnesians were dissatisfied with Chalkideus' treaty. But quite how the second treaty was an improvement is unclear, except in so far as it specified that the Persians should pay all troops in their territory at their request (8.37.4). Elsewhere, if anything, it is even more favourable to the Persians. For example, it not merely requires the Spartans to prevent tribute from cities in Asia Minor going to the Athenians, but forbids them to exact it themselves (8.37.2). After the conclusion of the treaty, Therimenes handed over to Astyochos and sailed away in a small ship, to be lost at sea.²³

The Athenians now made a determined effort to recover Chios. Setting out from Lesbos (cf. 8.34), they landed on the island and began fortifying Delphinion, just north of the modern Langádha, on the east coast. The Chians had by now lost much of their enthusiasm for the war. They had been repeatedly defeated and were riven by dissension. Only recently a group of pro-Athenians had been executed by Pedaritos, and the oligarchy now ruled by force. But when, thinking

that neither they nor Pedaritos and his mercenaries were a match for the Athenians, the oligarchs asked Astyochos for help, he refused, whereupon Pedaritos wrote to Sparta to denounce him (8.38.1–4). Astyochos was also, presumably, responsible for the Spartan fleet's unwillingness to come out and fight, despite repeated challenges from the Athenians at Samos (8.38.5). But in this he was showing sound strategic sense. The Spartans had no need to risk an engagement to carry on raising revolt in the Athenian empire.

At about the time of the winter solstice (then 24 December), the ships which had been fitted out by arrangement with Pharnabazos' agents (cf. 8.6.1 and 8.1) sailed from the Peloponnese. Their commander was the Spartan Antisthenes, and he was accompanied by no fewer than eleven advisers for Astyochos. Their instructions, in addition to taking general charge, were to send either their twenty-seven ships, or a larger or smaller squadron, to Pharnabazos under Klearchos, and, if the eleven agreed, to replace Astyochos with Antisthenes himself (8.39.1–2).

Some have thought this represents a fundamental change of strategy, resulting from growing Spartan dissatisfaction with Tissaphernes, now certainly advised by Alkibiades.²⁴ But it had already been decided, at the beginning of 412, to send forces to the Hellespont, after first fomenting rebellion in Ionia and on Lesbos, and there was no question of the whole fleet's being sent. The implication of the instructions given to Antisthenes and his colleagues was that at most not many more than their own twenty-seven ships would do (8.39.2), and in the event forty were sent (8.80.1). The decision to send Klearchos to the Hellespont now may have been prompted by King Agis. Xenophon says (*Hell.* 1.1.35) that when he saw from Dekeleia the grain ships sailing into the Peiraeus, he grumbled that it was no good he and his men keeping the Athenians from their land unless someone stopped the grain coming in by sea at its source. Xenophon connects this with Klearchos' second mission to Byzantion (see below, pp. 213–14), but it seems more suited to the first, particularly if the second started from Antandros.²⁵

Antisthenes and his squadron sailed from Cape Malea to Melos, where they encountered ten Athenian ships, three of which they took and burned, though their crews escaped. Then, fearing that the remaining seven would inform the fleet at Samos of their approach, they headed for Crete and so made their way, by a roundabout route, to Kaunos (near the modern village of Dalyan), on the coast of Asia Minor. From there they sent a message to Miletos asking for convoy (8.39.3–4).

Meanwhile, the Chians and Pedaritos continued to bombard Astyochos with appeals for help, stressing the importance of Chios and its precarious situation, and demanding help before the fortifications at Delphinion were complete. Astyochos was still disinclined to help, but when he saw how his allies felt, he prepared to do so (8.40). But his preparations were interrupted by news of the arrival of Antisthenes and his colleagues at Kaunos and he decided that providing convoy for them must come before anything else, partly because their twenty-seven ships would give him greater command at sea. Sailing for Kaunos, he put

in at Kos Meropis (8.41.2), which lay on the site of the modern main town of Kos, though at this time the city there was less important than Astypalaia ('Old City', now Kéfalo) at the western end of the island.²⁶ Kos Meropis was unwalled and had recently been devastated by an earthquake. Its people fled to the hills, but Astyochos plundered the countryside of everything, including slaves, leaving only its free population.

From Kos he went to Knidos, but left immediately for Syme (Simi) on being informed that there were twenty Athenian ships there. These had been sent under Charminos to watch for the twenty-seven ships from the Peloponnese, after news of their coming had reached Samos from Melos (8.41.3–4). Thucydides does not say how many ships Astyochos had, but his readiness to tackle Charminos' squadron suggests that he significantly outnumbered him, and from what Thucydides says later, it looks as though he had about sixty.²⁷ He hoped that by arriving unexpectedly he might catch the Athenians at sea, but in the darkness of a rainy and overcast night, his fleet became scattered, and at dawn only some of his ships were in sight of the enemy.

Thucydides' account of the ensuing skirmish is unclear, but the most natural interpretation is that the Spartan ships were heading east past the northern end of Syme when spotted by the Athenians coming out of the deep inlet which leads to the town of Syme. Thucydides calls these leading Spartan ships the 'left wing' (8.42.2), and they would thus have become the left wing when the fight began. The difficulty is that Thucydides also says the Athenians thought the enemy were Antisthenes' ships from Kaunos, which implies they were heading west. However, the situation was obviously confused and it may be that the Athenians simply assumed that the ships were from Kaunos because they had no inkling that any other enemy ships were in the vicinity.²⁸

When the Athenians saw the Spartan ships, they immediately attacked, even though, for some reason, not all were present. They had 'sunk' three ships, damaged others and were having the best of it when the rest of the Spartan fleet came up and they were surrounded. Turning to flight, they still managed to break away, though they lost six ships, and escaped to Teutloussa and thence to Halikarnassos.²⁹ The Peloponnesian fleet returned to Knidos, where it was joined by the twenty-seven ships from Kaunos (8.42.2–4). On receipt of news, the main Athenian fleet sailed from Samos to Syme, where it picked up the ships' tackle left there, and then returned to Samos without challenging the Spartans at Knidos. Though Astyochos probably had a slight numerical advantage, he, too, made no attempt to bring the Athenians to battle (8.43.1).³⁰

While the Spartan fleet lay at Knidos effecting repairs, a conference was held between Antisthenes and his colleagues and Tissaphernes. At this, Lichas, one of the advisers, denounced both the previous treaties, mainly on the ground that if, as they implied, the king of Persia could lay claim to all the territory once ruled by himself or his ancestors, all the islands and all mainland Greece as far as Boiotia would revert to him, and the Spartans would be bestowing not freedom but slavery on the Greeks. Another and better treaty should be concluded, and the

Spartans should not accept funds on the existing conditions. These treaties had possibly never been ratified at Sparta in any case, but Tissaphernes was furious and swept out without settling anything (8.43.3–4).

It is hard to see why Lichas took this line. One would like to believe that he was sincere about Greek freedom – the Spartans had, after all, allegedly gone to war for this (cf., e.g., 1.139.3). But he presumably had a hand in negotiating the third treaty, and this certainly handed over the Greek cities of Asia Minor to the Persians (8.58.2). He is also later said to have been displeased when the Milesians ejected the garrison from a Persian fort in their territory, though his Greek allies approved (8.84.4–5). However, what he took exception to in the earlier treaties was their implied surrender to Persia of the islands and territory in mainland Greece; he said nothing about the Greek cities in Asia Minor. Moreover, although the language he used to the Milesians was mealy-mouthed – they and all others in Persian territory should ‘serve’ (*douleuein* – literally ‘be slaves to’) Tissaphernes and ‘court his favour’ (*epitherapeuein*) – he did have the grace to add ‘within reason’ (*ta metria*), and, more significantly, ‘until they brought the war to a successful conclusion’ (8.84.5).

Nevertheless, however sincere he was, his outburst may have had an ulterior motive. Possibly he wanted to establish a bargaining position. He may have been disappointed when Tissaphernes walked out, but he probably calculated that he would be back, as indeed he was. Alternatively, since he and his colleagues had been instructed, if they thought it wise, to send ships to the Hellespont, where they could expect to be financed by Pharnabazos, it may be that he was deliberately seeking an excuse to break off relations with Tissaphernes. But this presupposes that the intention was to shift the focus of the war to the north, and this is not what Thucydides implies (cf. 8.39.2), as we have seen.

Any such move to the north had to be postponed, in any case, when the chance came to win over Rhodes. Representations had come from some of its most influential men, and the Spartans hoped that with its accession they might be able to finance their forces from their allies, without having to rely on Tissaphernes. Accordingly, they sailed from Knidos with ninety-four ships and put in first at Kameiros, on the west coast of the island. Most of the inhabitants fled, not knowing what was happening and their city being unwallled in any case. But the Spartans managed to bring them and the inhabitants of the other two cities, Lindos and Ialysos, together, and persuade them all to revolt (8.44.1–2).³¹

The Athenian response was swift, but their fleet arrived from Samos just too late. It appeared off Kameiros, but then retired to Chalke, from where, and from Kos, it made continuous raids on Rhodes. The Peloponnesians, meanwhile, collected thirty-two talents from the Rhodians, but in other respects remained inactive, with their ships hauled ashore, for eighty days (8.44.3–4). The sum collected was probably marginally less than the Rhodians had last paid Athens, and would have funded ninety-four ships for less than a month.³²

It is easy to criticize the Spartans for their apparent reluctance to face a numerically inferior Athenian fleet, but two things should be borne in mind.

One is that triremes needed to be dried out from time to time. The other, and more important, is that the Spartans had no need to risk a battle, even if they did have a numerical advantage. They had a secure base on Rhodes, and could wait until they had overwhelmingly superior numbers, as Astyochos had had off Syme. In the meantime, they could keep up their offensive against the Athenian empire with small, detached squadrons and land forces.³³

At this point Thucydides introduces various intrigues going on both in Asia Minor and in Athens, which had started earlier (8.45.1). Probably at the end of the summer of 412,³⁴ Astyochos had had a letter from Sparta ordering Alkibiades' execution, as a result of his quarrel with Agis and more general suspicions, and Alkibiades had taken refuge with Tissaphernes. He had begun to advise Tissaphernes not to be too eager to ensure a Spartan victory, and, in particular, not to bring up the Phoenician fleet he was having made ready. It would be better, he had suggested, to let the two Greek powers wear each other out. In the end, too, the Athenians would be more congenial allies, since they were not interested in a land empire, whereas the Spartans posed as the champions of Greek freedom (8.45–6). It is characteristic of Alkibiades that he always seems to have given the best advice to whomsoever he was serving at the time, and Thucydides says his advice to Tissaphernes was no different. But this time he had other fish to fry. His ultimate aim was to secure his return to Athens, and to this end he wanted to appear to be on good terms with Tissaphernes, in the hope that the Athenians would seek his good offices in doing a deal with Persia (8.47.1).

However, in messages to influential men in the Athenian fleet at Samos, he made it clear that he was prepared to co-operate only if the 'corrupt democracy' (8.47.2) that had exiled him was replaced by an oligarchy. This fitted in with what many of the trierarchs and other leading men in the fleet felt, and while the Spartan fleet lay at Kameiros, in the early months of 411, oligarchic plotting had begun on Samos, a delegation, led by Peisander, being sent to Athens to prepare the ground there. The only opposition had come from Phrynichos, who had seen through Alkibiades' designs, and had even gone so far as to contact Astyochos, while he was still in the neighbourhood of Miletos (8.50.2), at one point even giving him advice about how to attack Samos (8.50.5).³⁵

Meanwhile, Alkibiades had gone on trying to persuade Tissaphernes to adopt a more friendly attitude towards the Athenians, and Tissaphernes, though apprehensive about Spartan naval power, was inclined to adopt his advice. The Peloponnesian attitude at the Knidos conference had reinforced this inclination, and Lichas' outburst had seemed to confirm what Alkibiades had said about Spartan claims to be liberators (8.52).³⁶ Meanwhile, too, Peisander and his colleagues had arrived in Athens and laid the groundwork for an oligarchic coup. He had persuaded the assembly, albeit reluctantly, to send himself and ten others to make what arrangements seemed best with Tissaphernes and Alkibiades. He had also managed to get Phrynichos and another *stratēgos* replaced, the former on the grounds that his refusal to fight off Miletos had been responsible for the loss of Iasos and Amorgos (8.53–4).

The arrival of the two new *stratēgoi* briefly galvanized the Athenians watching Rhodes into action. Finding the Spartan fleet still drawn up ashore, they made a landing and, after defeating some Rhodian troops, returned to Chalke. This they now made their base, rather than Kos, since it was easier from the nearer island to spot any movement by the enemy fleet (8.55.1). It was at about this time, too, that the Chians and their Peloponnesian allies suffered a fresh disaster. Attacking the fortification protecting the Athenian ships at Delphinion, they took part of it and succeeded in dragging away some of the ships. But the Athenians counter-attacked, routed the Chian troops, and defeated Pedaritos and his mercenaries. Pedaritos himself was killed, as were many of the Chians, and a great quantity of arms was captured (8.56.2–3).

Soon afterwards, Peisander and his colleagues reached Tissaphernes' court, but found the situation changed. Alkibiades was aware that Tissaphernes still feared the Spartans and was inclined to let the Greeks wear each other out, as he had himself advised, rather than throw in with the Athenians, and this might leave him without his chief bargaining counter. So, by making increasing demands on Tissaphernes' behalf, he set out to make it appear that it was not Tissaphernes who was dragging his feet, but the Athenians. In Thucydides' opinion (8.56.3), this was also what Tissaphernes wanted, though his motive was fear of the Spartans. In fact, the Athenians accepted that Ionia and its offshore islands should be handed over to Persia, thus showing that they were just as willing as the Spartans to sacrifice Greek states in return for Persian support. But they finally balked at the demand that the king of Persia should be allowed to 'build ships and sail along his land wherever and with as many as he wished' (8.56.4).³⁷

This is puzzling because, on the face of it, the right of the king of Persia to send naval forces to any part of his dominions should have been obvious. Some have even been tempted to accept the reading of one of the manuscripts of Thucydides which could have the meaning that it was not the king's land that was in question, but that of the Athenians. This was certainly a demand Alkibiades would have known the Athenians would reject, but this meaning can only with difficulty be extracted from the reading in question, and such a demand would have appeared so absurd that the Athenian delegates might have begun to smell a rat – the last thing Alkibiades would have wanted.

Another and better explanation is that the demand amounted to rescinding the clauses in the Peace of Kallias between Athens and Persia which had in effect forbidden Persian warships to enter the Aegean. The difficulty with this is that Thucydides never mentions such a peace, and hence there is some doubt whether it ever existed. Perhaps, however, it is not necessary to drag the peace in here. Alkibiades may have made the demand, without any previous peace in mind, because, on the one hand, the demand that the king's ships be allowed to sail along his coast might indeed seem reasonable, but, on the other, the implied threat of Persian warships in the Aegean would appear so alarming to the Athenians that they were bound to reject it. In any case, the talks broke down, as both he and Tissaphernes had wanted, and the Athenian delegation returned to Samos (8.56).

It appears, indeed, that Tissaphernes had finally made up his mind to throw his weight behind the Spartans, for immediately after the break-up of the meeting he went to Kaunos. His intention was, Thucydides says (8.57.1), to get the Peloponnesians back to Miletos and there make another agreement. He also intended to supply them with funds in case they might be compelled to fight at a disadvantage and present victory to the Athenians, without his doing anything to aid the latter, and he was also afraid that they might plunder the mainland in search of funds. His policy was still to balance one side against the other, but he clearly now felt he had to do something for the Spartan side.

The third treaty is dated to the thirteenth year of King Darius II (8.58.1), which we know from Babylonian sources began on 29 March 411, though the negotiations probably took place somewhat earlier, and presumably both sets of negotiators had to consult with their home governments – indeed, this was probably the first of the treaties to be properly ratified. The main differences between it and the previous agreements are, first, that ‘the sons of Pharnakes’ are among the participants on the Persian side, and this almost certainly means primarily Pharnabazos, to whom the Spartans were now also committed. Second, there is now no reference to any territory Darius’ ancestors had once ruled, perhaps as a concession to Spartan susceptibilities. Third, reference is now made to a Persian fleet, and pay for the Spartan fleet, at the already agreed rate, is to last only until the king’s ships arrive. Thereafter, it is to be the responsibility of the Spartans and their allies to pay for their own ships, if they are willing, and if they wish to continue to draw pay from the Persians, they are to refund it at the end of the war (8.58.5–6). In other words, the implication is that the Persian contribution to the war is now to take the form of naval forces, and, possibly, that the Persians no longer regarded the Peloponnesian fleet as necessary. As it turned out, however, the Persian fleet never did arrive, and so the Spartan fleet continued to be funded largely by Persia.

Shortly after the conclusion of the treaty, an important event took place in mainland Greece. The Boiotians captured Oropos, in northeastern Attica, aided by anti-Athenian elements in Oropos itself and in Eretria, just across the Euripos, in Euboia. More importantly, now that they were free of fear of Athenian intervention from Oropos, the Eretrians sent representatives to Rhodes to ask the Peloponnesians to help Euboia to revolt. The island had been simmering with rebellion since the winter of 413/12, when King Agis had promised help, only to turn to Lesbos instead (8.5.1–2), and now, too, the Euboians were to be disappointed. The Spartans did decide to leave Rhodes, but, according to Thucydides (8.60.2), it was not the Euboian appeal which finally got them to move, but the threat to Chios.

The Athenians had apparently already left Chalke, and it was off Triopion that the two fleets came in sight of each other. The scene was again set for a great naval battle, but, as off Miletos the previous year, it never happened. This time both fleets declined the challenge, the Athenians proceeding on their way to Samos, the Spartans to Miletos (8.60.3). The Spartans may have thought the risk

not worth taking with the king's fleet about to come to their aid, but it is less easy to see why the Athenians declined the chance. One suggestion is that they knew at least of the capture of Oropos, if not of the sending of Euboian representatives to Rhodes, and wanted to get back to Samos so as to be in a position to sail for the mainland, if the threat to Euboia materialized.³⁸ But they can hardly have seriously contemplated abandoning the eastern Aegean, however important Euboia was to them, when there were, in any case, ships available nearer at hand (cf. 8.94–5).

There may rather have been some tactical reason for their avoidance of battle. For one thing, they were presumably encumbered with masts and sails since they had not expected to fight, and although the Spartans would have been, too, the Athenians may have felt this would be more to their disadvantage, since it was they who relied more on speed and manoeuvrability. In any case, one should not assume that the Athenians were eager for battle at any and every opportunity. They had, after all, been just as disinclined to provoke one off Knidos the previous winter, as Thucydides says (8.43.1).

The Spartans now saw that they could not go to Chios' aid without fighting a sea battle (8.60.3), but, in any case, in the spring of 411 came a new development which was to have far-reaching consequences. They had allegedly had it in mind to send forces to the Hellespont for more than a year (cf. 8.8.2), and the twenty-seven ships which had brought Lichas and his colleagues had been destined for the task (8.39.1). As we have also seen, Pharnabazos had been referred to in the recent treaty, albeit obliquely. But if it was too risky to intervene in Chios with the Athenian fleet at Samos, it was equally risky to send ships to the Hellespont. However, the Athenians could not prevent movement by land, and now the Spartan Derkylidas was sent overland with a small force to raise Abydos in revolt (8.61.1). Abydos lay a short distance north of the modern Çanakkale, and commanded the narrowest part of the straits.

At about the same time things also took a turn for the better on Chios. During the winter, while the Spartan fleet was still at Rhodes, the Chians had been sent a new Spartan commander, Leon. He had accompanied Antisthenes as what Thucydides describes as '*epibates*' (8.61.2), a word which usually means 'marine', but here evidently means something like 'rear-admiral' (cf. Xen., *Hell.* 1.3.17; *Hell. Ox.* 22(17).4). He had brought twelve ships with him from Miletos, and now the Chians sortied from their main city with all their forces and took up a strong position, presumably between the city and Delphinion. At the same time, they attacked the thirty-two Athenian ships at Delphinion with thirty-six of their own, and after a hard-fought engagement retired to the city, having had rather the better of it (8.61.2–3). Immediately after this, Derkylidas reached the Hellespont, and first Abydos revolted, then, two days later, Lampsakos (now Lapseki), at the northeastern entrance to the straits.

When the news reached Chios, the Athenians immediately sent twenty-four triremes and some transports, under Strombichides. He first attacked Lampsakos, and, since it was unwallled, its people sallied and were defeated. Strombichides

plundered it of property and slaves, but allowed its people to reoccupy their homes. He then attacked Abydos, but failed to take it, and instead crossed the straits to Sestos, which he made the chief Athenian base in the region (8.62.2–3).

His departure left the Athenian forces at Chios much weaker, at least at sea, and Astyochos was now encouraged to sail to the island with a mere two ships. Apparently collecting Leon's twelve from there, he then returned to Miletos, and with his whole fleet made for Samos. He probably outnumbered the Athenians by some 30 ships – he later had 112 to their 82 (8.79.1–2) – and obviously hoped they would accept his challenge. But they refused it, not so much because of their numerical inferiority, Thucydides says (8.63.2), as because they were suspicious of one another. This was because 'at about this time or even earlier' an anti-democratic coup took place in Athens (8.63.3).

The result of the coup was that the council of Five Hundred was replaced by a council of Four Hundred, its members carefully selected by a complicated process clearly designed to ensure that only supporters of oligarchy got in (8.67.3). Hence the coup is often known as the 'revolution of the Four Hundred'. According to Thucydides (*loc. cit.*), the Four Hundred were to have full powers to govern as they saw fit, and needed to summon the 'Five Thousand', who were to form the new assembly, only if they so decided. In any case, the Five Thousand was roughly to consist of men of the hoplite class (cf. 8.65.3 and 97.1), and though such men were not necessarily in favour of oligarchy, they were, even in normal times, probably not as radical as those from the thetic class, who served in the navy. Thanks to the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* (32.1), we know that the old council was dissolved on the 14th day of the Athenian month Thargelion (probably 9 June 411), and the new one inaugurated on the 22nd of the same month (17 June). According to the same source (33.1), the new regime lasted for 'perhaps four months', that is, counting inclusively, until September.³⁹

The regime was never accepted by the armed forces at Samos, but the intrigues led to knock-on effects elsewhere in the Athenian empire (8.64.1–2). The oligarchs hoped thereby to strengthen their position, but in many places the result was revolt from Athens (8.64.5), as Phrynichos had warned (8.48.5). This was particularly true of Thasos in the northern Aegean. The democratic regime there was suppressed by Dietrephes, the Athenian commander of the Thraceward region, but within two months of his departure the Thasians began to fortify their main city, 'daily expecting to be set free by the Spartans' (8.64.3). At the same time, those exiled by the Athenians, who had taken refuge in the Peloponnese, did everything they could to get help sent to the island. A passage in the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* (7(2).4) gives the credit for the revolt to the Corinthian Timolaos, and Xenophon (*Hell.* 1.1.32) says the name of the Spartan harmost (governor) of the island was Eteonikos.

How far events in Athens weakened her war effort in general is not clear. After a similar anti-democratic coup on Samos had been defeated, the Athenian armed forces there turned decisively against oligarchy, declaring in effect that they were

now the 'people' of Athens, and Thucydides says they were encouraged to believe that they were in a better position than those at home (8.76.3–7).

In the first instance, indeed, it was in the Spartan fleet that there were disturbances over pay and other things (8.78), and when Astyochos again decided to offer battle to assuage his allies' feelings, the Athenians had apparently already made an aggressive move. They had crossed the straits between Samos and the Mykale peninsula, and were at anchor off a place called Glauke, the precise whereabouts of which is unknown. However, since Astyochos now had 112 ships, and they only 82, they prudently withdrew to Samos (8.79.1–2). In any case, they were expecting Strombichides from the Hellespont, and when he arrived next day it was the Spartans' turn to withdraw, to Miletos. Now with 108 ships, the Athenians offered battle, but this time the Spartans declined (8.79.3–6).

Since they were disinclined to fight with the fleets so evenly matched, and were still having difficulty in securing funds from Tissaphernes, the Spartans now decided to send forty ships to the Hellespont under Klearchos, in accordance with their instructions from the Peloponnese. Apparently Pharnabazos had offered to pay for the ships, and Byzantion (Istanbul), of which Klearchos was *proxenos* (Xen., *Hell.* 1.1.35) at Sparta, was ripe for revolt. But in trying to avoid being seen by the Athenians at Samos, Klearchos' fleet took a roundabout route, probably sailing south of Ikaros, and ran into a storm. Most of the fleet, with Klearchos himself, fetched up at Delos and then returned to Miletos, and only ten ships, under the Megarian Helixos, reached Byzantion. It was probably not entirely an accident that it was a Megarian who got through safely, since Byzantion was originally a Megarian colony, and Helixos' arrival was enough to tip the balance in favour of revolt. Klearchos also later reached the Hellespont by land and took over the command there (8.80.1–3).

The Athenian armed forces at Samos now finally decided to send for Alkibiades. They were still convinced that he could bring Tissaphernes over to their side, and at the assembly held after his arrival he continued to exaggerate his hold over the satrap, to frighten the oligarchy at home, boost his standing with the armed forces and damage relations between Tissaphernes and the Spartans. Tissaphernes, he claimed, had promised that the Athenians would never go short of supplies even if he had to sell his own bed. More pointedly, he would bring the Phoenician fleet to their aid instead of the Spartans', but would trust the Athenians only if he, Alkibiades, were to be recalled (8.81).

The assembly immediately elected him *stratêgos*, and, says Thucydides (8.82.1), 'entrusted everything to him'. Indeed, so confident were the men now of ultimate success that they were all for sailing to the Peiraeus there and then, though Alkibiades was able to dissuade them. He then returned to Tissaphernes with the news that he now held command again among the Athenians. As Thucydides says (8.82.3), 'he was thus able to use the Athenians to frighten Tissaphernes and Tissaphernes to frighten the Athenians'.

The immediate effect of Alkibiades' recall on the Spartans and their allies was

to create a mutinous situation at Miletos. Tissaphernes had become even more lax about payment after Astyochos' latest refusal to fight, and the latter's men now openly began to accuse him of humouring Tissaphernes for his own purposes (8.83). Things got so bad that the Syracusans and Thourians, in particular, who were all free men (8.84.2), crowded round him and demanded their pay. Foolishly, he answered with threats, and when the Thourian commander, the famous Rhodian athlete Dorieus, then in exile, spoke up for his men, Astyochos even threatened him with his staff. We should make some allowance for the fact that a Spartan was probably unaccustomed to such indiscipline, but he should have learned by now that he could not treat his allies like this. Threatened with violence, he had to seek asylum at an altar (8.84.2–3),⁴⁰ and it was lucky for him, perhaps, that his successor, Mindaros, arrived soon afterwards and he was able to leave for home. Astyochos was accompanied by an envoy from Tissaphernes, sent to protest at Milesian actions and to defend his own, and Milesian envoys also sailed for Sparta to counter Tissaphernes' accusations. With them went Hermokrates, newly exiled from Syracuse, who had constantly been at loggerheads with Tissaphernes over pay (8.85).

By now Alkibiades had returned to Samos, and he was in time to attend the assembly at which representatives of the Four Hundred attempted to win over the forces. They claimed they had no intention of surrendering to Sparta, that the Five Thousand would have a share in the government, and that, contrary to rumour, no harm had been done to any of the forces' relatives in Athens (8.86.1–3). Thucydides confirms by implication that the rumours were untrue (8.74). They had been spread by Chaireas, a member of the crew of the *Paralos*, which had been sent to Athens to carry news of the counter-coup on Samos. He had escaped back to Samos when the Four Hundred arrested some of his fellow-sailors and put the rest on a troopship on patrol off Euboea.

No amount of persuasion, however, could convince the soldiers and sailors forming the assembly on Samos, and they were all set to carry a proposal to sail on Athens when Alkibiades intervened. In Thucydides' opinion (8.86.4–5), no other man could have controlled them at this time,⁴¹ and, as he says, if the Athenian fleet had returned home, it would certainly have meant the loss of Ionia and the Hellespont. As it was, the oligarchic delegation was sent packing with an answer delivered by Alkibiades himself. He was not opposed to government by the Five Thousand, but they must get rid of the Four Hundred and reinstate the old council of Five Hundred. He was in favour of any economies which would result in better pay for the forces, and he urged them to hold on and make no concession to the enemy. That way the two parties might be reconciled (8.86.6–7).

There then followed a puzzling incident. Tissaphernes departed to fetch the Phoenician fleet which had reached Aspendos (Balkız) on the Eurymedon (Köprü Çayı). Thucydides says that Tissaphernes wanted, or at least seemed to want, to clear himself of accusations that he was supporting the Athenians (8.87.1), and took Lichas with him, leaving orders to his deputy, Tamos, to pay

the Spartan fleet in his absence. Even Thucydides was uncertain of his real intentions (8.87.2). Why, in particular, did he go to Aspendos and then not bring the fleet into the Aegean? Thucydides himself thought he was still trying to wear the Greeks out, and had no intention of giving the Spartans an overwhelming numerical advantage in ships, citing Tamos' failure to provide funds as one piece of evidence (8.87.3). But the real reason may have been that there was a revolt in Egypt at this time and that Tissaphernes had to send the ships back to Phoenicia (cf. DS 13.46.6).⁴²

Whatever the truth of the matter, Alkibiades was able to turn it to his advantage. Taking thirteen ships, he set off for Aspendos himself, telling the Athenians that either he would bring the Phoenician fleet to their aid or at least would prevent it joining the Peloponnesians. Thucydides was probably right to guess that he knew all along that Tissaphernes had no intention of bringing the fleet into the Aegean, and wanted to damn him in the eyes of the Peloponnesians by making it appear that it was his friendship with himself that was the reason, thus forcing him to come over to their side (8.88).

Meanwhile, the representatives of the Four Hundred returned to Athens with Alkibiades' message. In it he appears to have been trying to drive a wedge between the more extreme and the more moderate oligarchs, who had probably always been in favour of a greater role for the Five Thousand. Another potential source of dissension was the extent to which they were prepared to go to safeguard their position, even if it meant virtual surrender to Sparta. According to Thucydides (8.70.2), soon after they had seized power, the Four Hundred had sent representatives to King Agis at Dekeleia, and although when he had moved right up to the city walls, hoping to exploit the situation, he had been met by resolute defiance (8.71.1–2), they had then, on his advice, sent representatives to Sparta (8.71.3), though they never arrived (8.86.9). Finally, when they realized that they were never going to win over the forces on Samos, the extremists sent some of their most influential leaders to Sparta (8.90.2), determined to secure peace at any price. Their first aim was to preserve both oligarchy and empire (8.91.3), but, if that was not possible, to keep the fleet and the walls and remain autonomous. If even this was impossible, rather than be the first to be eliminated by a restored democracy, they were prepared to admit the enemy, on any terms, provided that their own safety was guaranteed.

In the meantime, they went on constructing a refuge for themselves on Eëtioneia, the narrow promontory on the west side of the main harbour at the Peiraieus (8.90.4–5), though they evidently claimed that it was to keep out the Samos forces (cf. 8.90.3).⁴³ But Theramenes, who had become the mouthpiece of the moderates, declared that their real purpose was to let in the Spartans, and that this may have been true is suggested by Thucydides' statement (8.91.1) that their representatives returned from Sparta without having achieved anything that would satisfy everyone. His point is presumably that they had come to a secret agreement that would satisfy them and their friends, namely, to betray the city in return for their own safety. Theramenes' accusations, in any case, seemed to

be confirmed by news of a fleet of forty-two ships being fitted out at Las in Lakonia. Its ostensible objective was to help the Euboians, but its real purpose, Theramenes maintained, was to come to the aid of those involved in the work on Eëtoneia (8.91.1–2), and Thucydides says this was true (8.91.3).

The murder of Phrynichos, who had become one of the leaders of the oligarchy when his distrust of Alkibiades had been so dramatically confirmed, finally encouraged Theramenes and others into open opposition, particularly when the appearance of the Spartan fleet off Epidaurus and its overrunning of Aigina seemed to confirm Theramenes' suspicions. When the hoplites helping with the building work down at Eëtoneia arrested the *stratēgos* Alexikles, Theramenes, who was one of his colleagues, went down to the Peiraeus, ostensibly to secure his release. While feigning anger with the hoplites, he agreed that it would be better to demolish the new wall, and they began to do so (8.92).

Next day, the hoplites, after releasing Alexikles and completing the destruction of the wall, gathered at the theatre of Dionysos near Mounychia and voted to march on the city, but when they reached the Anakeion, the temple of the Dioskouroi on the north slope of the Akropolis, they were met by representatives of the Four Hundred. Mainly by promising finally to constitute the Five Thousand, these managed to calm the troops, and it was agreed to hold an assembly to settle differences at the theatre of Dionysos in Athens, on a given day (8.93). When the day came, however, it was reported that the Spartan fleet was sailing past Salamis, and immediately everybody rushed down to the Peiraeus. While some manned the ships that were ready and dragged others into the water, others took up positions on the walls and at the mouth of the harbour. Thucydides thought it possible that Agesandridas, the Spartan commander, had been lurking in the vicinity because of some pre-arranged plan (8.94), but it is more likely that, hearing of the disturbances in Athens, he had thought that some opportunity to intervene might arise. In any case, presumably now realizing that any attempt on the Peiraeus would be resisted, he sailed past, rounded Sounion, and, having anchored briefly between Thorikos and the Attic Prasiai (Porto Rafti), arrived at Oropos (8.95.1).

The Athenians were now in a complete panic. The threat to Euboia was obvious, and Euboia, as we have seen, was vital now that they were unable to farm their own land because of the Spartan presence at Dekeleia. Hastily assembling a scratch fleet, manned by crews not trained to row together – perhaps the single most important factor in determining a trireme's speed and manoeuvrability – they sent it off to Eretria under Theomachares. With the ships already there, Theomachares had thirty-six altogether, but had to fight before he had had time to train his crews (8.95.2–3).

Oropos lies only some 7 miles (11 kilometres) across the Euripos from Eretria – about an hour's row – and since Agesandridas put to sea after breakfast, he would have come into sight quite early in the morning. The Athenians began to man their ships, but the sailors were gathering food on the outskirts of the city, since the Eretrians had deliberately arranged that there should be none in the

market-place, and had also hoisted a signal to tell the Spartans when to make their move (8.95.4). So it was in some disorder that the Athenians put to sea, and the battle took place just outside the harbour. They held out for some time, but then turned to flight and were pursued to land. Those of them who tried to take refuge in Eretria itself, supposing it to be friendly, were massacred, and only those who fled to a fort in Eretrian territory or managed to get their ships to Chalkis survived. The Spartans took twenty-two ships, and not long afterwards raised the whole of Euboea in revolt, apart from Oreoi on its northern coast, which had been settled by Athenians in 446 (8.95.5–7).

The news of what had happened threw the Athenians into an even worse panic – Thucydides says that not even the Sicilian disaster had seemed so ominous (8.96.1). Their most immediate fear was that the victorious Spartans would make straight for the Peiraeus, which was bereft of ships. Thucydides thought that this might have had catastrophic consequences, at the very least compelling the Athenian fleet to return from Samos, with the consequent loss of the Hellespont, Ionia and the rest of the empire. Not for the first time, he castigates Spartan slowness and caution, even going so far as to describe them as the ‘most helpful’ enemies Athens could have had, and contrasting them with the Syracusans (8.96.5).

There is, of course, something in this. But if a sudden dash on the Peiraeus had not resulted in the fall of Athens, which is unlikely, even if the Athenian fleet had had to come home, it would not have led to immediate disaster. Not every state in the empire would have revolted, and once the civil unrest in Athens had been settled, as it surely would have been with the fleet’s return, the Athenians could have set about recovery from a firm base. Nor is Thucydides wholly fair to the Spartans. There were plenty of bold men among their commanders – Brasidas and Gylippos to name but two – and it was really the latter who had galvanized the Syracusans. They had been on the point of holding an assembly to discuss terms when Gongylos arrived and told them of Gylippos’ coming (7.2.1).

The respite certainly put fresh heart into the Athenians. They manned twenty ships, which shows that, despite what Thucydides claims, they still had some available.⁴⁴ These would not have been enough to fight the Spartans in open water, even if the latter had not been able to man the ships they had captured, but they would probably have been enough to prevent entry to the Peiraeus, and one suspects others could have been scraped together. They also voted to dissolve the Four Hundred and to hand power to the Five Thousand, a body which was to be made up of those who could afford arms, that is, the hoplites. Almost certainly there were more than 5,000, and ‘Five Thousand’ had a nominal meaning.⁴⁵ In a notoriously enigmatic passage, Thucydides appears to say that the initial period of the new regime was when Athenian affairs were managed best, at least in his time.⁴⁶

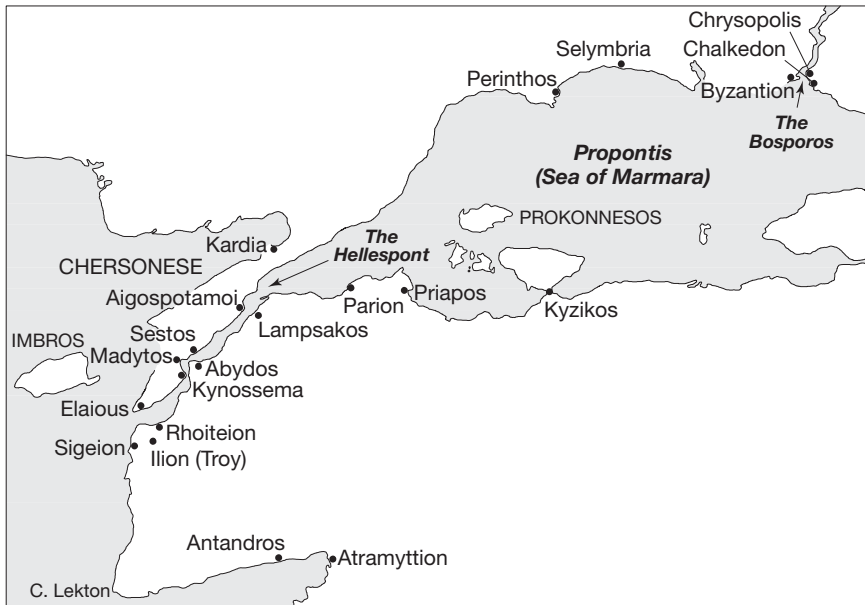
One of the first acts of the new regime was to recall exiles, including Alkibiades, and to urge the fleet to prosecute the war. The extreme oligarchs had

in the meantime fled to Dekeleia, and one of their number, the *stratêgos* Aristarchos, showed how far they were prepared to go by taking some of the least Hellenized archers and tricking the Athenian border-fort of Oinoe into surrendering to the Boiotians (8.98). At about the same time, across the Aegean, the increasing intransigence of Tissaphernes' officers over pay and his reluctance to bring the Phoenician fleet into the Aegean finally persuaded the Spartan navarch, Mindaros, to take his fleet to the Hellespont, a move which was to usher in a new and bloodier phase in the war.

WAR IN THE NORTH

Mindaros made careful preparations to evade the Athenians at Samos, giving the order only at the last minute (8.99). He had already sent sixteen ships to the Hellespont, and although Thucydides does not mention it, probably thirteen more to Rhodes (cf. DS 13.38.5; Xen., *Hell.* 1.1.2). So it was with seventy-three that he left Miletos. Like Klearchos, he ran into a storm, but managed to put into Ikaros, and thence made his way to Chios (8.99).

Thrasylos, one of the Athenian *stratēgoi* at Samos, hearing of his departure, sailed immediately with fifty-five ships, anxious to reach the Hellespont first, but turned aside to deal with the situation on Lesbos when he learned that the Spartan fleet was at Chios. Leaving lookouts on the island's east coast, he made



Map 12 The Hellespont and Propontis (Sea of Marmara)

Methymna his headquarters, and laid in supplies in case Mindaros should linger at Chios. He then first attacked Eresos, which had been induced to revolt by Methymnaian exiles. They had brought 300 men across from the mainland, and had first been beaten off from Methymna itself by Athenian troops from Mytilene. At Eresos Thrasyllus met Thrasybulos, who had already arrived from Samos with five ships, and they were joined by two more Athenian ships on their way home from the Hellespont and by five from Methymna, bringing their total to sixty-seven (8.100).¹

This gave Mindaros the chance to slip through the channel between Lesbos and the mainland, taking his morning meal at Karteria in Phokaian territory, the exact whereabouts of which is unknown, and his evening one at the Arginousai, probably the islands southwest of Mytilene (now Garipadasi and Kalemadasi), the scene of the battle in 406. From there he sailed while it was still dark, reaching Hermatous, on the mainland opposite Methymna (possibly Sivrice Bay), in time for breakfast. Presumably, by passing through the channel between Lesbos and the mainland in the dark, he avoided being seen by the Athenian lookouts set to watch the passage. From Hermatous he rounded Lekton (now Baba Burun), at the southwest corner of the Troad, and headed northwards for the Hellespont, reaching Rhoiteion (Intepe) just before midnight, though some of his stragglers put in at Sigeion (Yeniköy) and other places to the south (8.101). The whole voyage, accomplished in two days, was some 189 nautical miles (349 kilometres) long, which gives some idea of the capabilities of even quite a large fleet of triremes.²

Warned by fire-signals of the Spartan fleet's arrival, and seeing for themselves the many fires on the Asiatic shore to the south, the eighteen Athenian ships at Sestos set out that night and, by hugging the Chersonese shore, managed to evade the sixteen Spartan ships at Abydos across the straits. But the Spartan fleet had been told to keep a lookout for the Athenians, and at dawn the latter spotted Mindaros' ships, apparently already at sea. Twelve of the Athenian ships managed to escape to Imbros (Imroz Adasi) and Lemnos (Limnos), but the rearmost four were caught near Elaious. One ran aground near the temple of Protesilaos and was captured with its crew, two others were taken empty, and the fourth was abandoned on the shore of Imbros and burned by the enemy (8.102). Mindaros was now joined by the squadron from Abydos, bringing his total up to eighty-six ships (8.103.1), and although there is some doubt about the true figure (cf. 8.104.2 and DS 13.39.3), the discrepancies are trivial. After failing to take Elaious, the Spartan fleet made for Abydos.

Meanwhile, the Athenians besieging Eresos had heard nothing from their lookouts on Lesbos' east coast, but made for the Hellespont as soon as they learned where Mindaros was. On their way they captured two Spartan ships that had been too bold in pursuing the fourteen Athenian ships which had earlier escaped from the Hellespont, and then made for Elaious. With the additional fourteen ships, they should now have had eighty-one, but Thucydides says they had seventy-six in the battle that followed (8.104.2), so possibly they had left the five from Methymna at Eresos.

After five days of preparation, the Athenians rowed out in line-ahead from Elaious along the shore of the Chersonese towards Sestos, while the Spartan fleet came southwestwards from Abydos to meet them. As the two fleets came opposite each other, the Athenian line extended along the Chersonese from Idakos to Arrianoi (8.104.2), the Spartans and their allies along the Asiatic shore from Abydos to Dardanos. Although we do not know precisely where Idakos and Arrianoi were, it is clear that the leading Athenian ships were beyond the sharp bend at Kilibakir, opposite Çanakkale, at that time called Kynossema, the 'Bitch's Tomb', because Hekuba had supposedly been buried there (8.104.5; cf. DS 13.40.6; Strabo 7, fr. 55 Loeb; Euripides, *Hekuba*, lines 1265–73). When the two fleets turned into line-of-battle, the Syracusans formed the Spartan right, Mindaros and his best ships the left, while Thrasylos commanded the Athenian left, and Thrasyboulos their right (8.104.3).

With his slight numerical advantage, Mindaros hoped to overreach the Athenian right and so prevent their escape out to sea, and in the centre to drive them ashore. The Athenians on the right managed to frustrate his attempt to outflank them by extending beyond his left, but since their left had already got beyond Kynossema, their centre became dangerously stretched. Here the Peloponnesians drove the Athenians ashore, and, landing themselves, began to gain the upper hand. Meanwhile, Thrasyboulos, outnumbered, was unable to come to the centre's aid, and Thrasylos could not see what was happening because of the sharp bend of Kynossema, and was also faced by as many enemy ships as he had himself (8.104–105.2).

So far the Spartan fleet had had the better of it, but now, thinking they were winning, the Peloponnesians recklessly began to go after individual ships, and much of their line became disordered. Seeing this, Thrasyboulos, on the Athenian right, ceased his lateral movement, turned to port and defeated the ships opposite him. He then attacked the victorious, but now disordered, enemy centre, putting most of it to flight without resistance. At the same time the Syracusans on the enemy right began to give way before Thrasylos and turned to flight when they saw what was happening elsewhere (8.105.2–3). Most of the Spartan fleet managed to escape, first to the River Meidios (possibly the Koca Çay, opposite Kynossema), then to Abydos, but twenty-one of its ships were captured, as against fifteen of the Athenians (8.106.1).

This is Thucydides' account of the battle, but, though clear enough in outline, it does not really explain how Thrasyboulos got the better of Mindaros when the latter had the best ships in his fleet and superior numbers, and why the Syracusans were already giving way to Thrasylos before they saw the rest of their fleet in flight. Some have tried to supplement Thucydides by using Diodoros,³ but the latter's account seems to be full of errors and does not really make sense. First, he says the Syracusan commander was Hermokrates (13.39.4), whereas Thucydides, probably rightly, says he had already been exiled and had gone to Sparta earlier in the year (8.85.3).⁴ Second, Diodoros reverses the positions of Thrasylos and Thrasyboulos (13.39.4), and again he is almost certainly wrong.

He evidently found difficulty in distinguishing between the two, and later (13.64.1–97.6) appears to conflate them into a single figure called ‘Thrasyboulos’.⁵ Third, he puts the battle between Abydos and Sestos (13.39.5), and if this had been true, it would not have been called ‘Kynossema’ since that landmark lay some miles southwest of Abydos.

Diodoros’ account of the battle itself, though detailed, is also very confused. Thus he says that at first both sides tried to avoid having the current against them (13.39.4–5), but no amount of manoeuvring would have given either an advantage since the current flowed parallel to their lines, and what is said about their ‘trying to sail round each other’ looks like a garbled reference to Mindaros’ attempt to outflank the Athenian right. When he talks of ‘blocking the narrows’, it almost seems as though he envisaged the two lines as across the straits, and ‘the narrows’ should, in any case, refer to those between Kynossema and the shore opposite: between Abydos and Sestos, where he puts the battle, the channel is much wider. He might have made the point that the current possibly prevented the Athenians achieving a greater success, for when Thrasyboulos turned to deal with the disordered enemy centre, he would have had to row against it. But Diodoros says that both sides were hindered by it (13.40.3).

What he says about the skill of the Athenian helmsmen (13.39.5–40.1) may be correct, but the use they are said to have put it to does not ring true. Why should some manoeuvre to bring about ramming prow-to-prow (13.40.1) when they regarded this as an indication of lack of skill (cf. 7.36.5), and when others are said to have managed to avoid it and ram in the side (13.40.2)? If the enemy marines were so superior (13.40.1), how did the Athenians manage to hold their own in the boarding-fight that Mindaros initiated when ramming failed? Finally, Diodoros says that what in the end tipped the balance in the Athenians’ favour was the sudden appearance of twenty-five additional ships ‘beyond a certain headland’ (note the vagueness), which had been sent by ‘their allies’ (13.40.4). Thucydides says nothing of this and it looks like a doublet of what happened in the later battle off Abydos (see below, pp. 100–1). In any case, who were these ‘allies’? The only ones Athens had left with any ships were the Methymnians and they could certainly not have sent as many as twenty-five.

Thucydides says (8.106.1) the reason why the Athenians only captured relatively few ships was that the narrowness of the straits allowed most of the fleeing enemy vessels to reach the safety of the shore. But, as he emphasizes, nothing could have been more timely for them than this victory. Because of recent reverses and the disaster in Sicily, they had come to fear the Spartan navy, but now their confidence in themselves was restored and they ceased to believe the enemy was superior in any respect (8.106.2). The news also heartened those at home, and they began to believe in the possibility of a successful outcome to the war, if they acted with resolution (8.106.5).

Three days after the battle, having refitted at Sestos, the Athenians sailed for Kyzikos in the Propontis, which had gone over to Klearchos and Pharnabazos shortly before Kynossema (DS 13.40.6). The city lay astride the isthmus joining

the Arktonnesos peninsula (now Kapidag Yarımadası) to the mainland. On the way, the Athenians spotted eight Spartan ships from Byzantion, which had possibly aided in the revolt, at anchor between Priapos (Karabiga) and Harpagion (just east of the mouth of the Granikos, the modern Koçabaş). Putting in, they routed the enemy onshore and captured the ships. Kyzikos was unwallled and the Athenians had no difficulty in restoring their control. They exacted an indemnity before returning to Sestos.

This is one of the many instances when financial considerations seem to have hampered the Athenian war effort at this stage in the war. Here, while they were restoring control over Kyzikos, the Spartans were able to sail from Abydos to Elaious and there recover those of their captured ships that were seaworthy, the rest having been burned (8.107). They also sent to Euboia for the ships there, but, according to Ephoros, as quoted by Diodoros (13.41.2–3), the fifty ships from Euboia were all destroyed in a storm off Mount Athos, only twelve men surviving, though there is probably some exaggeration here.

Meanwhile, Alkibiades returned to Samos with his thirteen ships, claiming that he had prevented the Phoenician fleet from coming to the aid of the Spartans, and had won over Tissaphernes even more firmly to the Athenian cause. He then manned nine more ships and sailed for Halikarnassos and Kos, exacting a considerable sum from the former – another indication of Athenian financial difficulties – and fortifying the latter. Finally, since it was now autumn (probably October), he returned to Samos (8.108.1–2).

Tissaphernes also returned to Ionia at about this time. He had heard that the Spartan fleet had gone to the Hellespont, and also that Antandros had expelled the garrison installed there by his deputy, Arsakes (8.108.3–4), possibly when Derkylidas marched to the Hellespont earlier in the year (cf. 8.61.1). Antandros was properly in Pharnabazos' province (cf. Xen., *Hell.* 1.1.25), but Tissaphernes may have been able to interfere by virtue of his superior authority from the king (cf. 8.5.4). Arsakes' exactions had proved burdensome, and the Antandrians also feared something similar to the atrocity he had committed ten years earlier at nearby Atramyttion (Edremit: 8.108.4–5).

What had happened at Antandros, coming on top of similar events at Miletos and Knidos, showed Tissaphernes how bad his relations with the Peloponnesians had now become, and he was also worried at the role Pharnabazos was beginning to assume. So he resolved to go to the Hellespont himself to protest at what had happened at Antandros, and to try to clear himself of charges relating to the Phoenician fleet and other matters. It is here, with the words 'arriving first at Ephesos, he made a sacrifice to Artemis' (8.109.2), that Thucydides' account of the war comes to its premature end, and from now on we have to depend on other sources, chiefly Xenophon, Diodoros and Plutarch.

Xenophon's *Hellenika* ('Greek History') begins abruptly with what looks like a reference to the battle off Eretria, described by Thucydides (8.95), though Xenophon apparently puts it after Kynossema.⁶ Next Xenophon (1.1.2–3)

describes the dawn arrival of fourteen ships under Dorieus, and an inconclusive clash, fought partly at sea, partly on land, between his squadron as he tried to beach it near Rhoiteion, and twenty Athenian ships sent to deal with him. As we have seen (above, p. 195), Dorieus had probably been sent to Rhodes by Mindaros shortly before his departure for the Hellespont, to deal with a counter-revolution on the island, as Diodoros says (13.38.5). Now, after successfully accomplishing this, according to Diodoros (13.45.1–6), he arrived in the Hellespont, and was set upon by seventy-four Athenian ships, not just Xenophon's twenty, and ran for Dardanos, not Rhoiteion. Here he disembarked his marines, and, joining forces with the town's garrison, was trying to fight off the Athenians as they attempted to drag away his ships, when Mindaros came to his aid with eighty-four ships, and a full-scale battle took place. In Xenophon (1.1.4), Mindaros is sacrificing at Ilion (Troy) when he sees what is happening.

There are also differences between the two accounts of the battle. In Xenophon's shorter one, the Athenians put out against Mindaros and fight indecisively round Abydos from morning to late afternoon, until Alkibiades arrives with eighteen ships. The Peloponnesians then flee to Abydos, and Pharnabazos comes to their aid, himself riding into the sea to encourage his men, while the Peloponnesians pack their ships closely together along the shore. In the end, the Athenians return to Sestos with thirty captured ships and having recovered all they had lost themselves (1.1.5–7).

Diodoros gives Mindaros ninety-seven ships for the battle itself (13.45.7), leaving us to assume that he had added thirteen of Dorieus' fourteen to his original fleet (13.45.6). He then says he placed the Syracusans on his left and himself took command of the right (13.45.7). As for the Athenians, he leaves us to understand that they had the seventy-four ships with which they had originally attacked Dorieus (13.45.2), and says Thrasyboulos commanded the right, Thrasylllos the left. This is suspicious because it is what Thucydides says about Kynossema (8.104.3), whereas there, as we saw, Diodoros reverses the order.

Diodoros also goes into more detail about the actual battle, and if the details are authentic, they add to our idea of what fighting at sea was like. He repeats what he says in his account of Kynossema about the skill of the helmsmen in bringing about ramming prow-to-prow, but this time applies it to both sides (13.45.8–9), and adds that the marines were terrified when their ships were broadside on to an enemy, but recovered their spirits when the helmsmen avoided the attack (13.45.10). He also describes how the archers fired when the ships were at a distance, the javelineers joining in as the range closed, and adds the interesting detail that while some aimed at opposing marines, others tried to kill the helmsmen. Whenever ships collided, finally, the marines first used spears and then swords as they boarded (13.46.1).

As in Xenophon's account, the battle in Diodoros is evenly balanced until Alkibiades' unexpected arrival, with twenty ships instead of Xenophon's eighteen, and he adds the surely authentic detail that neither side could be sure which side the newcomers were on until Alkibiades hoisted an agreed

recognition-signal in the shape of a crimson flag (13.46.3). Plutarch, who also gives Alkibiades eighteen ships, merely describes the flag as 'friendly' (*Alk.* 27.3). In Diodoros the Spartan fleet then turns to flight, and the Athenians capture ten ships, but are prevented from doing more by a storm. They pursue the Spartans to shore, but Pharnabazos' army intervenes, and they withdraw to Sestos (13.46.3–5). Then, however, Diodoros seems to confuse Pharnabazos with Tissaphernes when he says that the former was anxious to justify himself to the Spartans, particularly for sending the 300 ships to Phoenicia (13.46.3). As we saw (above, p. 191), it may be true that Tissaphernes sent the Phoenician fleet home because of a revolt in Arabia and Egypt.

Clearly all three sources are describing the same battle, and one taking place after Kynossema and somewhere near by, though Plutarch seems to have largely followed Xenophon. If the latter is right in saying the Athenians captured thirty ships – Plutarch repeats the figure (*Alk.* 27.4) – this was a greater victory than Kynossema, but Diodoros says they captured only ten. All three sources are agreed on the part played by Pharnabazos, and that is significant.

After their victory, according to Xenophon (1.1.8), all but forty of the Athenian ships scattered to collect funds outside the Hellespont, while Thrasyllus was sent home to report the victory and ask for more ships and troops, the latter request possibly prompted by the enemy's habit of running to shore for safety. This scattering of the Athenian fleet is the clearest indication yet that they were having to resort to desperate measures to secure funds, whereas we hear of no such plundering raids by the Spartans, who were presumably being funded by Pharnabazos. This meant that increasingly the Athenians could not keep up the pressure on the enemy for any length of time.

Diodoros says nothing about any of this, but instead embarks on an account of events in Euboia, the Aegean, Kerkyra and Macedonia. We know from Thucydides (8.95.7) that the whole of Euboia, except for Oreoi, had revolted from Athens after the Spartan victory off Eretria. Now, in the light of recent Athenian naval victories, the Euboians became afraid of possible attack and asked the Boiotians to help them bridge the Euripos at Chalkis. The channel was narrowed to allow the passage of only a single ship, and spanned with a wooden bridge, with towers at either end (DS 13.47.3–5). Diodoros probably derived this from Ephoros since Strabo (9.2.2) quotes the latter as saying that a bridge, just over 200 feet (60 metres) long, spanned the Euripos at Chalkis.⁷

Theramenes, with thirty ships, attempted to put a stop to the work, but was deterred by troops guarding the workmen, and went off instead to gather funds from the Aegean islands. Seizing booty from rebel territory, he also exacted cash from any allied city which showed any sign of disloyalty, and, in particular, deposed the oligarchy which had seized control of Paros, and screwed a large sum from those who had participated in the oligarchic regime (DS 13.47.7–8). These oligarchic revolutions were no doubt due to the machinations of the Athenian oligarchs, who had visited places on their way from Samos to Athens before the coup there (cf. Thuc. 8.64–65.1). Theramenes went on to help Archelaos, the

new king of Macedonia, besiege Pydna, and then joined Thrasyboulos in Thrace (DS 13.49.1).

Macedonia had long been a source of timber for the Athenian navy, and Theramenes' mission to Archelaos probably had something to do with this. Archelaos' predecessor, Perdikkas, had undertaken not to allow anyone to export oars except to the Athenians, by the terms of his alliance with them (IG i³ 89.22f.), and Andokides boasts that shortly after the Four Hundred seized power he had been allowed to cut and export as many oars as he wished for the Athenian fleet at Samos, because of his family's hereditary connections with Archelaos (2.11). A fragmentary inscription also survives, probably honouring Archelaos, and mentioning oars (ML 91=Fornara 161, line 30).

The winter of 411/10 was now coming to an end, and Mindaros, according to Diodoros (13.49.2–4), assembled his fleet, including reinforcements, and went to join Pharnabazos in storming Kyzikos. Meanwhile, the remaining Athenians at Sestos, thinking that his preparations presaged an overwhelming attack on themselves, had withdrawn to Kardia, on the other side of the Chersonese, and from there sent urgent messages to summon Thrasyboulos and Theramenes from Thrace, and Alkibiades from Lesbos (13.49.3).

According to Xenophon (1.1.9; cf. Plut., *Alk.* 27.4–5), after the battle off Abydos, Alkibiades had gone to visit Tissaphernes, and had promptly been arrested and imprisoned in Sardis. From there he had contrived to escape to Klazomenai on horseback, with Mantitheos, another Athenian officer, who had been captured in Karia, presumably on yet another plundering raid. An escape from Sardis to Klazomenai makes sense. The distance is only about 70 miles (112 kilometres), and Klazomenai was perhaps the nearest port still on friendly terms with the Athenians (cf. Thuc. 8.31.2–4). Plutarch confirms the story (*Alk.* 28.1), but says that Alkibiades tried to damage Tissaphernes' reputation by alleging that he had been released by him, which is perhaps more plausible than that he had simply managed to escape. Presumably Alkibiades had still been anxious to give the impression that he was well in with Tissaphernes, but his arrest, if not Tissaphernes' declaration that the king had ordered him to fight the Athenians, should have finally disabused even Alkibiades of the notion that he could still win the satrap's support.

Both Xenophon (1.1.11) and Plutarch (*loc. cit.*) simply say that after his escape Alkibiades made his way to the Athenian fleet at Kardia, but it is quite possible that he went via Lesbos, as Diodoros implies (13.49.3). This may be where he picked up the five triremes Xenophon says he brought with him, since it is unlikely that there were any at Klazomenai, whereas Thucydides says Methymna had sent five ships to aid the Athenian attack on Eresos, before Kynossema (8.100.5).⁸

Xenophon (1.1.11–13) says that when Alkibiades learned that Mindaros had gone to Kyzikos, he made his way across the Chersonese to Sestos, ordering the forty ships at Kardia to follow him there, and soon afterwards, as he was about to put to sea in readiness for battle, he was joined by Theramenes with twenty

ships and Thrasyboulos with twenty more. Telling them to remove their main sails and follow him, he then sailed for Parion. Diodoros, however, probably rightly, implies that the Athenians assembled at Elaious before sailing up the Hellespont, and adds what looks like the authentic detail that they made a point of sailing past Abydos at night to conceal their numbers; he also implies that they went straight on to Prokonnesos (now Marmara Adast). It is possible that Alkibiades had gone to Sestos by land, that they picked him up there, and also left their main sails there. But, unless they did all this at night, they could hardly have avoided being seen from Abydos.⁹

Parion (now Kemer), where Xenophon says the Athenians put in before going to Prokonnesos, lay on the Asiatic shore just where the Hellespont widens out into the Propontis. This, too, risked giving away not only their presence, but what seems to have been the main thing they wanted to conceal, their numbers. Admittedly Xenophon says they left Parion at night, but by then the damage could have been done. However, here as elsewhere, we should not assume that security would have been as tight then as it would be now, and it is difficult to believe the fleet made the journey from Elaious to Prokonnesos, a distance of over 75 nautical miles (138 kilometres) without stopping, as Diodoros implies, though it is possible.¹⁰

The Athenians should now have had eighty-five triremes, and Xenophon says there were eighty-six at Parion (1.1.13); Diodoros gives no figure for them, but says Mindaros had eighty (13.50.2), whereas Xenophon claims he had only sixty (1.1.11 and 16). The discrepancy is the same as that between their figures for the Spartan losses off Abydos, but this does not help to resolve the issue. For what it is worth, Justin (5.4.1) says eighty Spartan ships were captured in the subsequent battle. On the other hand, if Mindaros was outnumbered eighty-six to sixty, this might help to explain the overwhelming nature of his defeat.

All three of our main sources are agreed that the Athenians put in at Prokonnesos before the battle, but then they diverge. Xenophon says they spent the day there, impounding merchantmen and boats with the warning that anyone sailing across to the mainland opposite would be executed, to prevent any news of their numbers reaching Mindaros. Next day, Alkibiades calls an assembly, and then they put to sea (1.1.14–16). In Diodoros, after spending one night at Prokonnesos, they disembark their land forces in Kyzikene territory, and order their commander, Chaireas, to advance on the city (13.49.6). This is confirmed by Frontinus (*Strat.* 2.5.44), though he says Chaireas and his men were landed at night. They were, presumably, landed some distance west of the city.¹¹

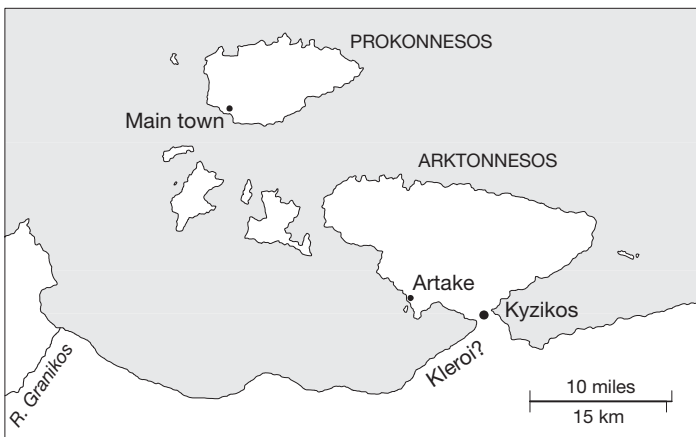
The sources also differ over what happened at sea. In Xenophon, the Athenians put to sea in heavy rain, and when the sky clears find themselves between Mindaros, who is exercising his sixty ships, and the city (1.1.16). Seeing the enemy has many more ships than before (i.e. than at Sestos), Mindaros runs for the land and, packing his ships close together, makes a fight of it along the shore (1.1.17). Then Alkibiades, 'having sailed round' with twenty ships, disembarks, and after Mindaros has also done so, he dies fighting and his men flee. Finally,

the Athenians return to Prokonnesos with the captured ships, except for those of Syracuse, which the Syracusans themselves burn (1.1.18).

Diodoros is, as usual, more detailed, and, for once, more convincing.¹² He has the Athenians divide their fleet into three squadrons, under Alkibiades, Theramenes and Thrasyboulos, and Alkibiades goes ahead in a deliberate attempt to lure the enemy into attacking him, while Theramenes and Thrasyboulos contrive to circle round and block their retreat (13.50.1). Frontinus (*Strat.* 2.5.44) confirms this, and adds the possibly authentic detail that some of the Athenian ships were hidden behind ‘certain promontories’, possibly including the one west of Kyzikos, which separated it from Artake (now Erdek, the principal town of the region).¹³ Plutarch, finally, combines this with Xenophon’s rain, adding thunder and darkness (*Alk.* 28.3).

When Mindaros saw Alkibiades’ ships, Diodoros goes on (13.50.2), he boldly put out to attack them with his eighty ships, and happily set off in pursuit when they turned to flight. The text, as it stands, gives no number for Alkibiades’ squadron, but it has been conjectured that it originally contained the numeral for ‘20’ (κ’), the number Xenophon gives (1.1.18). Plutarch, however, gives him forty (*Alk.* 28.4), and this may be right. It has been pointed out that Mindaros probably knew that the Athenians had had at least forty ships previously at Sestos, and might have been suspicious if he now saw only twenty.¹⁴

When Alkibiades thought he had drawn Mindaros far enough, Diodoros continues (13.50.3), he raised a signal and turned to fight, while Theramenes and Thrasyboulos slipped between the Spartans and the city. Alarmed at the number of ships he now realized he faced, Mindaros ran for the shore at a place called Kleroi, where Pharnabazos and his army were camped (13.50.4). We do not know where this was, but the name means ‘lots’, and may refer to plots of land



Map 13 Kyzikos

assigned to the colonists of Kyzikos, presumably not far from the city to the southwest. Alkibiades pursued vigorously, damaging some ships and capturing others before they reached land, then grappling those run ashore and trying to tow them away (13.50.5). Even if he had as many as forty ships, he would have been able to attack only about half Mindaros' fleet, and it appears later that his attack fell mostly on its right. If so, he may have been trying to prevent any retreat to Kyzikos.

At this point, however, Pharnabazos came to Mindaros' assistance in force, and for a while it was touch and go (DS 13.50.6). But Thrasyboulos saw what was happening and landed his marines in support, urging Theramenes to join Chaireas and come to their aid as quickly as possible (DS 13.50.7). Since, as we have seen, Chaireas was almost certainly coming from the west, and he and Theramenes reached Thrasyboulos first (DS 13.51.2), the latter will have landed on Alkibiades' right, and, it appears, beyond Mindaros' left.

Mindaros, who had more men than Alkibiades, now sent Klearchos, with some of the Peloponnesian troops and Pharnabazos' mercenaries, to hold off Thrasyboulos, and for a time the latter also found himself hard pressed. But at last Theramenes and Chaireas came up and Thrasyboulos' men got their second wind. Pharnabazos' mercenaries were the first to give way, and were followed by Klearchos and his Peloponnesians. Theramenes then pressed on to help Alkibiades, and Mindaros again split his forces, sending half to oppose him and keeping half to continue the fight against Alkibiades. But when he was killed, his men finally broke, and the Athenians, finding pursuit hindered by Pharnabazos' cavalry, withdrew to their ships (DS 13.51.1–7).

Kyzikos gave the Athenians almost complete command in northern waters, and mostly elsewhere, for the better part of the next three years. With Byzantion and Chalkedon still in revolt, there remained a threat to their food supply,¹⁵ but at least it was no longer threatened by superior naval forces, and they could begin the task of recovering these rebel cities and those elsewhere. Whether they made the best use of their victory is another matter. Apart from the question of whether they should have accepted the Spartan offer of peace after the battle, there is a certain aimlessness about their operations down to 407, and they were even slow to make a concerted effort to recover control of Byzantion.

As far as the Spartans were concerned, Kyzikos set them back to where they had been earlier in the war. They could still operate with small squadrons, but it was not until 407, when Lysander finally established good relations with the Persian prince Cyrus, that they were again in a position to face a full-scale confrontation at sea, and even then they dared not risk it until the following year. Their immediate despair is vividly caught in the message from Mindaros' lieutenant Hippokrates, which the Athenians intercepted after the battle: 'Ships gone. Mindaros dead. Men hungry. Don't know what to do' (Xen. 1.1.23). Nor was the despair felt only among the remnants of their forces in the north, for although Xenophon does not mention it, Diodoros is almost certainly correct in saying (13.51.2) they now made an offer of peace.

The day after the battle, the Athenians sailed to Kyzikos and were admitted without resistance. During the twenty days they remained, they exacted large sums of money, but otherwise did the people no harm. They then returned, briefly, to Prokonnesos, before moving on to Perinthos (Eregli) and Selymbria (Silivri), on the north shore of the Propontis, west of Byzantion. Perinthos, too, offered no resistance, and although Selymbria refused to admit them, its people agreed to hand over a sum of money (Xen. 1.1.18–21).

Next, the Athenians established a fortified base at Chrysopolis (Scutari), near Chalkedon, and set up a customs-house for the collection of a 10 per cent toll on merchant ships passing through the Bosporos.¹⁶ This was presumably in addition to the 5 per cent tax on imports and exports imposed throughout the empire in 413, to replace the old tribute (Thuc. 7.28.4). Then, after leaving Theramenes and Eumachos to guard the place with thirty ships, the other *stratēgoi* returned to the Hellespont (Xen. 1.1.22). Diodoros says (13.64.3) that fifty ships were left to lay siege to Byzantion and Chalkedon, and Xenophon appears partly to confirm this when he says (1.1.26) that Pharnabazos went to the aid of Chalkedon after giving orders for the construction of a new Spartan fleet at Antandros.

At this point Xenophon (1.1.27–31) gives an account of the removal of Hermokrates from command of the Syracusan squadron, which Thucydides puts in 411 (8.85.2–4). If Thucydides is right, as he almost certainly is (see above, p. 197), the next incidents reported by Xenophon (1.1.32) may also have been misplaced from 411.¹⁷ What he says is that there was unrest on Thasos ‘at about this time’, resulting in the pro-Spartan element and the Spartan harmost, Eteonikos, being expelled. The Lakonian Pasippidas was accused, with Tissaphernes, of being responsible, and was exiled, and Kratesippidas was sent to take command of the fleet Pasippidas had assembled at Chios.

If this properly belongs to 411, it may have been the fall of the Four Hundred which led to Eteonikos’ expulsion, and Pasippidas and Tissaphernes, who were obviously not directly involved, may have been blamed for failing to help him. Tissaphernes was on very bad terms with the Spartans at this time, as we have seen. If, on the other hand, Xenophon is right to place the incident in 410, it may have been Kyzikos which caused the swing against Sparta on the island. Xenophon’s description of Pasippidas as ‘the Lakonian’, instead of ‘the Lakedaimonian’ or ‘the Spartiate’, may indicate that he was a *periōikos*, like Phrynīs (Thuc. 8.6.4), Deinias (Thuc. 8.22.1) and, possibly, Meleas (Thuc. 3.5.2) and Xenophantidas (Thuc. 8.55.2). If the Pasippidas who turns up as a naval commander and ambassador to the king of Persia in 409 (Xen. 1.3.17 and 13) is the same man, he had either been recalled from exile or was exiled later.

Potentially the most important result of Kyzikos was Sparta’s offer of peace, if it is historical. It is not reported by Xenophon, but Diodoros’ account (13.52.2ff.) is eminently plausible, including the detail that the chief Spartan emissary was Endios. He had already served on a similar mission in 420, had been ephor in 413/12, and was a hereditary friend of Alkibiades (Thuc. 5.54.3 and 8.6.3).

Diodoros is also supported by a fragment of Philochoros (*FGH* 328F139), by Nepos (*Alc.* 5) and by Justin (5.4).

Endios' speech to the Athenians, as recorded by Diodoros (13.53.3–54), is unlikely to be authentic, though the first paragraph, setting out the terms, has a Spartan ring to it and by itself could fit Diodoros' claim that he spoke 'tersely and laconically'.¹⁸ The terms offered were that the parties should keep the cities they controlled, remove their garrisons from each other's territory, and release prisoners on a one-for-one basis.

If we are to believe Diodoros (13.53.2), and the other sources, the offer was rejected, largely through the opposition of the new popular leader, Kleophon. It has been usual, from antiquity to the present day, to blame Kleophon and his supporters for throwing away a golden opportunity to end the war on reasonable terms, but although hindsight may justify such a view, it is arguable that Kleophon was right at the time.¹⁹ Evacuation of forces from each other's territory was to the Athenians' advantage, since the Spartan occupation of Dekeleia was far more damaging to them than their occupation of Pylos was to Sparta, and they had already abandoned their post in Lakonia (*Thuc.* 8.4); if the Boiotians had been obliged to surrender Oropos, that would have been an added bonus. On the other hand, apart from Oreoi, they would have lost the whole of Euboea, an island about which they were particularly sensitive (cf. *Thuc.* 8.1.3 and 96.1), and many of their most important allies, including Rhodes, Miletos, Ephesos and Chios. Abydos would have continued to pose a threat to their control of the Hellespont, and, above all, Byzantion and Chalkedon could at any time have blocked access to the grain from the Black Sea region. Now that there was every chance of recovering control of both the Hellespont and the Bosporos, it would have been crazy to accept anything less.

Another result of the victory at Kyzikos may have been the restoration of full democracy at Athens. Curiously enough, this is not mentioned in any of the sources, except perhaps for the briefest of references in the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* (34.1).²⁰ The best evidence for it is the decree of Demophantos, quoted by Andokides (1.96–8) and dated, probably, to July 410, in our terms. The decree begins with the old formula, 'It seemed good to the Council and the People', and the council in question is specified as 'chosen by lot', possibly to make clear that it is not the one associated with the Five Thousand, which may have been elective. The decree itself lays down heavy penalties for anyone attempting to subvert democracy. Clearly, by the time it was passed, democracy had been restored, so the date of the restoration was probably some time earlier, perhaps in June 410.

Possibly in response to the rejection of the peace offer, King Agis again led his army right up to the walls of Athens, as he had done in 411.²¹ But Thrasyllus, who had been sent home after Abydos and was still in Athens, boldly led out all the forces available in the city, and deployed them near the Lykeion, just under a mile (1.5 kilometres) outside the Diochaes Gate, on the east side of the city. Quite what Agis was doing on this side of the city is unclear, but he hurriedly

retreated, losing some of his rearguard to Athenian light troops (Xen. 1.1.34). In the euphoria produced by this success, Thrasyllus, who had come to Athens to ask for reinforcements, was enthusiastically voted 1,000 hoplites, 100 cavalry and 50 triremes (*loc. cit.*).

At this point, unfortunately, we encounter chronological difficulties which are not finally resolved until 406, when all are agreed the battle of Arginousai took place.²² Certainty is impossible, but when Xenophon says that Thrasyllus invaded Lydia 'when the grain was ripening' (1.2.4), that is to say in late May or early June, it is difficult to believe that the year in question is 410. If it were, since Kyzikos was almost certainly fought in March or April of that year,²³ the Spartan peace offer, the restoration of full democracy, Agis' raid, the vote on Thrasyllus' forces and his preparations would all have to be fitted into the space of at most about two months. So when Xenophon says Thrasyllus left Athens 'in the next year' (1.2.1), it seems best to take this to mean 409, and the most natural way to take the notifications of new years thereafter is to put the beginning of 408 at 1.3.1 and of 407 at 1.4.2. The year 406 certainly begins at 1.6.1, since the lunar eclipse reported there has been calculated to be that of 15 April that year.²⁴

Thrasyllus, then, probably left Athens in the early spring of 409. He took with him, Xenophon says (1.2.1), 'the ships that had been voted', and this presumably means he also took the 1,000 hoplites and 100 cavalry voted at the same time (1.1.34). In addition, he took 1,000 shields to arm his sailors as peltasts (1.2.1). If he had only thirty ships, as Diodoros alleges (13.64.1), he would have been thinking of arming nearly all his oarsmen, and this is contradicted by Xenophon's account of the first fighting in which his forces are involved. Here the hoplites and peltasts are distinguished from the 'light troops' (*psiloi*: 1.2.3), who are presumably sailors acting as foragers. Whereas, too, 1,000 hoplites could probably have been accommodated on 50 triremes, 30 would almost certainly have been too few.

Thrasyllus had originally been sent from the Hellespont to ask for reinforcements (Xen. 1.1.8), and we would have expected him to go there once his preparations were complete. Instead, he sailed for Samos. Political reasons have been adduced for this apparent change of plan,²⁵ but it is more probable that the Athenians wanted to see how the situation in Ionia had developed since the departure of their fleet in 411. With Tissaphernes at loggerheads with the Spartans, and several Greek cities having ejected his garrisons (cf. Thuc. 8.84, 108.4–5 and 109.1), the time may have seemed ripe to try to recover control there. Possibly Thrasyllus' instructions were to see what he could do in Ionia, but then, unless some great success beckoned, to transfer his forces to the north.

Having remained at Samos for three days, he crossed to Pygela (now Kusadasi), a small town southwest of Ephesos, where he landed, and while some of his men assaulted the town, others scattered to forage. At this point troops arrived from Miletos to help Pygela and fell upon the scattered foragers. One wonders why help came from so far away when Ephesos was so much nearer, but Xenophon offers no explanation. In any case, when Athenian hoplites and the peltasts arrived

to protect their foragers, they all but annihilated the Milesians, capturing 200 hoplite shields (Xen. 1.2.2–3).

Having failed to take Pygela, Thrasylos re-embarked his men and next day made for Notion, the port of Kolophon, before moving inland to Kolophon itself. Kolophon came over to him, and the following night the Athenians spread into Lydia, which was Persian territory, ‘when the grain was ripening’ (May/June), burning villages and seizing money, slaves and other booty, until frightened off by Persian cavalry. Thrasylos led his men back to the coast, intending to sail to Ephesos (Xen. 1.2.4–6), but then wasted sixteen days (1.2.7). He may have needed time to reorganize his forces before attacking a large city, but the delay was fatal, giving Tissaphernes time to rally support for Ephesos, including the crews of the twenty Syracusan and two Selinountine ships lost at Kyzikos, which had evidently now been replaced, and men from an additional five Syracusan ships (1.2.8).

Thrasylos eventually reached Ephesos, apparently, in the early hours of the seventeenth day. Dividing his forces, he landed his hoplites at the harbour of Koressos, and his cavalry, marines, peltasts and others on the opposite side of the city.²⁶ His forces were obviously too small to undertake a siege, and by dividing them he may have hoped to distract the defence and achieve surprise with one or other column. He himself seems to have taken command of the hoplites, and an officer called ‘Pasion’ or ‘Pasiphon’ of the rest (*Hell. Ox.* 1.7–10). But when, at daybreak, he ordered the advance, the Ephesians and their allies, including some Spartans, according to the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* (1.5–6), sortied, first against him and his hoplites. According to Xenophon (1.2.9), about 100 were killed and the rest driven back to the sea, but the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* (1.16–23) imply that Thrasylos at first managed to get right up to the city, where he again divided his forces, leaving some to storm the walls and taking others to a nearby hill (possibly the Panajir Dag). It was only when some of his men had penetrated into the city that they and those outside were routed. Meanwhile, Pasion/Pasiphon and his men were also initially successful and were pressing on to attack the city when the Ephesians summoned their by now victorious hoplites and routed them, too. Xenophon says 300 were killed (1.2.9).

As suggested above, it may always have been Thrasylos’ intention to make for the Hellespont after a foray to Ionia, and now, after recovering his dead under truce, he returned to Notion and then sailed immediately for Lesbos (Xen. 1.2.11). It was probably after his departure, though Xenophon appears to date it to 410 (1.1.32), that the Spartan Kratesippidas appeared on the scene with twenty-five ships (DS 13.65.3). After perhaps adding the ships collected at Chios by a previous commander, Pasippidas, to his fleet (Xen. 1.1.32), Kratesippidas aided pro-Spartan exiles to recover control of Chios, though this was offset by their opponents’ seizure of Atarneus, on the mainland opposite Lesbos, whence they carried on a war with the new regime in Chios (DS 13.65.3–4).

While anchored at Methymna, Thrasylos spotted the twenty-five Syracusan ships from Ephesos sailing past and immediately attacked them, capturing four

and chasing the remainder back whence they had come (Xen. 1.2.12). According to Xenophon (1.2.13), he sent the rest of his prisoners back to Athens, but, as the text stands, 'stoned to death' (*kateleusen*) Alkibiades' cousin of the same name, who had been exiled with him. One would have thought Thrasyllus would not have wanted to risk antagonizing Alkibiades, although it is possible that he and his cousin were on bad terms, and one is tempted to think that what Xenophon actually wrote was that Thrasyllus 'released' (*apelusen*) the cousin, or something of the sort. The Syracusan prisoners were thrown into the limestone quarries on the Akte at Peiraieus, clearly in revenge for the similar treatment of Athenian prisoners at Syracuse, but they contrived to dig their way out and escape, some to Dekeleia, others to Megara (Xen. 1.2.14).

This is the last time Syracusan forces played any part in the war, for during the second half of 409 the Carthaginians invaded Sicily, and the Syracusans hastened home (DS 13.54.1–62). However, though they had been perhaps the most experienced and active of Sparta's naval allies in the initial stages of the war in the Aegean, they had also been at times the most disruptive (cf., e.g., Thuc. 8.84), and in number of ships their contribution had been small. All in all, the Spartans may not have been sorry to see them go.

Since Thrasyllus finally seems to have joined Alkibiades at Sestos just before the winter of 409/8 (Xen. 1.3.14), he evidently spent some time at Methymna, and one wonders why. It has been suggested that after his failure in Ionia, he may have been in no hurry to join the victorious northern fleet, and waited to intercept the Syracusans because he did not want to repeat his failure of 411 and let them reach the Hellespont (cf. Thuc. 8.100–1).²⁷ But this presupposes that he knew that the Syracusans were on their way and it is not easy to see how. Another possibility is that he wanted to check on the state of affairs in Lesbos, or was even thinking of using it as a base for attacking Chios, as he had in 411 (Thuc. 8.100.2). Alternatively, he may just have been dilatory. We should not always look for strategic or tactical reasons to explain delays in ancient warfare, particularly, perhaps, where Thrasyllus is concerned.

When eventually he did leave Methymna, he joined Alkibiades at Sestos just before the onset of winter, and almost immediately the combined Athenian forces crossed to Lampsakos (Xen. 1.2.13). This suggests that Alkibiades' apparent inactivity since arriving in the Hellespont about a year earlier was due to lack of ships and men. If Diodoros is right that Theramenes had been left at Chrysopolis with fifty ships and Thrasyboulos had been sent to Thrace with, say, twenty more, as in the winter of 411/10 (13.64.3; cf. Xen. 1.1.12), Alkibiades may have had only about twenty, unless the Athenians had been able to man a significant number of those captured at Kyzikos. We should also remember that he would have had a correspondingly small number of marines for land operations.

At Lampsakos the two Athenians tried to reorganize their land forces, though at first with difficulty, if Xenophon (1.2.15) is to be believed, Alkibiades' men being reluctant to join forces with Thrasyllus' after their defeat. Diodoros (13.64.4) may even imply that for a time the two commands operated separately.

This may strike modern readers as childish, but there are parallels in more recent history,²⁸ and at least they co-operated in fortifying Lampsakos – remains of the walls could still be seen some 2,000 years later²⁹ – and in attacking the last Spartan stronghold in the region, Abydos. Here they defeated Pharnabazos' cavalry, and Alkibiades pursued him with cavalry and hoplites, the former presumably from Thrasyllus' army, until darkness fell (Xen. 1.2.15–16). After this joint success, Xenophon says (1.2.17), Alkibiades' and Thrasyllus' men were content to join forces, and spent the winter ravaging Persian territory.

Early that same winter, the Spartans finally recaptured Pylos, held by the Athenians since 425. They had sent five Sicilian and six Spartan ships and an adequate land force, and when the news reached Athens, the Athenians had responded by sending thirty ships under Anytos, later to achieve notoriety as one of Sokrates' accusers. But Anytos had claimed to have been unable to round Cape Malea because of bad weather and had returned to Athens, whereupon, after holding out for some time, the Messenian garrison had surrendered Pylos under truce. Anytos was brought to trial, but bribed his way to an acquittal, reputedly the first man to bribe a jury in Athens (DS 13.64.5–7). Xenophon's brief note of the episode (1.2.18) says that the Spartans 'released under truce the helots who had fled in rebellion from Malea to Koryphasion [i.e. Pylos]', but it is difficult to believe that rebel helots could make their way from Malea to Pylos. Possibly they were helots who had fled to the Athenian post on the west side of the Malea peninsula, established in 413 (Thuc. 7.26.2), and had been transferred to Pylos when the post was abandoned a year later (Thuc. 8.4).

Pylos had long since ceased to be of any real military value to Athens, as its disappearance from the sources for some five years before its recapture indicates: it is last mentioned by Thucydides as a base for raiding in winter 414/13 (7.18.3). It may, however, have had some symbolic significance for the Athenians as marking the high point of their earlier efforts, and it might also have been useful as a bargaining-counter against Dekeleia in any future negotiations. Another loss to Athens at about the same time, Diodoros implies (13.65.1), was Nisaia, the port of Megara, held since 424. This was of even less significance, if anything, since Peloponnesian forces were clearly able to bypass it on their way to and from Attica, and at least the Athenians had the satisfaction of routing the Megarian army in a battle near 'the Horns', on the border between Attica and the Megarid, though they failed to recover Nisaia.

In spring 408, leaving a garrison at Lampsakos, Alkibiades and Thrasyllus joined Theramenes at Chrysopolis (DS 13.66.1). Since Theramenes is now said to have had seventy ships, it is possible that Thrasyboulos had also returned from Thrace: it was suggested above that he had gone there with twenty ships the previous year. The combined Athenian fleet would now have contained 136 triremes or more, depending on how many captured ships one believes they could have manned.³⁰ The people of Chalkedon had realized that they were probably the next target and had taken the precaution of entrusting their

moveable property to their neighbours, the Bithynians. But when threatened by Alkibiades with a small army, including cavalry, and the entire Athenian fleet, the Bithynians surrendered the goods, and concluded a treaty. Alkibiades then returned to Chalkedon with the booty, and cut it off with a wooden stockade running from the Bosporos to the Propontis (Xen. 1.3.1–4).

No doubt alerted by Alkibiades' raid into his territory, if not by appeals from Chalkedon itself, Pharnabazos now arrived with an army, including cavalry in large numbers, and the Spartan harmost of Chalkedon, Hippokrates, timed a sortie to coincide with his approach. At the crucial moment, if Xenophon is to be believed, Alkibiades also arrived to help Thrasylos and his hoplites with a few more hoplites and cavalry, and the enemy fled back to the city, leaving Hippokrates dead on the field. Pharnabazos was apparently unable to deploy all his troops since there was only a narrow gap between the Athenian stockade and the river that flowed past the walls of the city (Xen. 1.3.7), and Plutarch's account (*Alk.* 30.1) suggests Alkibiades had been able to drive him off before coming to Thrasylos' aid.

Pharnabazos, however, was evidently not too heavily defeated, since he merely withdrew to his camp at a nearby shrine of Herakles (Xen. 1.3.7), and when Alkibiades left for the Hellespont and the Chersonese on yet another fundraising operation, the remaining Athenian commanders concluded an agreement, apparently with both Chalkedon and Pharnabazos. Xenophon (1.3.8–9) says the one with Pharnabazos was that he should pay them twenty talents, though it is not clear whether this was on his own account or that of Chalkedon, and conduct Athenian ambassadors to his king. They then agreed on oath that Chalkedon should pay Athens tribute at the previous rate, with arrears, and that the Athenians would not make war on the city until their ambassadors returned from the king. Plutarch (*Alk.* 31.1) adds that the Athenians also undertook not to ravage Pharnabazos' territory. Alkibiades was not present at the original exchange of oaths, but, after some prevarication on both sides, took the oath later, at Chrysopolis, in the presence of Pharnabazos' representatives, while the latter took it in Chalkedon in the presence of those of Alkibiades (Xen. 1.3.12).

There has been some discussion of the reasons why the Athenians make this agreement after their victory over Hippokrates and Pharnabazos, and about the exact subsequent status of Chalkedon.³¹ But, as noted above, Pharnabazos was still threatening, and the main Athenian objective was probably Byzantion. They might have recovered Chalkedon, but that would have required more military effort, and Pharnabazos' presence in the city for the exchange of oaths with Alkibiades' representatives suggests it was effectively under his control.

More interesting is Pharnabazos' undertaking to escort Athenian ambassadors to the king of Persia. They were accompanied by two Argives, ambassadors from Sparta and by the exiled Syracusans Hermokrates and his brother (Xen. 1.3.13), so what was envisaged was not just negotiations between Athens and Persia, as some seem to imply.³² The Argives, who may have been serving with the Athenian forces, though their compatriots had mainly gone home in 412 (Thuc.

8.27.6), possibly hoped they might be of help because of the traditional friendship between their people and Persia (cf. Hdt. 7.151.2), and the Syracusans were evidently on some kind of private business. But the presence of Spartan ambassadors, if that is what they were,³³ suggests an attempt to end the war. As it turned out, nothing came of the mission, so it is perhaps idle to speculate on what might have been the negotiating positions of the two sides. According to Xenophon (1.4.1–3), Pharnabazos and his party spent the winter (408/7) at Gordion, and were on their way again in the spring when they met a Spartan embassy led by Boiotios, on its way back from successful negotiations with the king, and accompanied by a new Persian supreme commander for western Asia Minor, Prince Cyrus.³⁴

When, before the agreement with Pharnabazos over Chalkedon, Alkibiades had gone to the Chersonese to raise funds, he had also recruited all its available fighting men, and considerable numbers of Thracians, including 300 cavalry (Xen. 1.3.10; DS 13.66.4). It has been suggested that it was now he acquired the strongholds in the Chersonese to which he fled after Notion (Xen. 1.5.17; see below pp. 222 and 224).³⁵ After leaving the Chersonese, he had also succeeded in capturing Selymbria, and Plutarch's account of this episode (*Alk.* 30.2–5), which is more detailed than those of Xenophon (1.3.10) or Diodoros (13.66.4), illustrates why he made such an impact on contemporaries.

Alkibiades was in touch with elements in the city about surrender, but the agreed signal was given too soon, and he ran to the walls with only about thirty men, telling the rest to follow as quickly as possible. A gate was opened, but when he burst in with his thirty men and twenty peltasts, he was confronted by the Selymbrians *en masse*. This was, however, the kind of situation in which he excelled. He immediately had a trumpet call for silence and ordered one of those present, presumably one of his supporters, to tell the Selymbrians not to fight Athenians. This had the effect of making them less keen to fight in case his entire army was already inside the walls, and some were mollified by hopes of an end to the conflict. While they were discussing the situation, the rest of Alkibiades' men joined him, and, realizing that he now had the upper hand, he took immediate steps to placate the population, ordering his Thracians out of the city and contenting himself with exacting a sum of money and leaving a garrison. A fragmentary inscription from Athens records the terms of the settlement and a decree confirming them, moved by Alkibiades himself on his return to Athens (ML 87=Fornara 162), showing how conciliatory the settlement was. After reaching it, Alkibiades joined Theramenes at Byzantion.

In addition to its own people, Byzantion was defended by *perioikoi*, *neodamôdeis*, Megarians and Boiotians, all under the command of the Spartan Klearchos. Some of these had arrived under the Megarian Helixos in 411, and Klearchos had himself originally come by land at about the same time (Thuc. 8.80.3). He had then fought at Kyzikos (DS 13.51.1 and 4), and had presumably taken refuge with Pharnabazos like the other fugitives. He had probably accompanied Pharnabazos to Antandros (cf. Xen. 1.1.25), and it may have been from there that he had

returned to Byzantion, or he may have gone home. He is said to have brought fifteen troopships carrying Megarians and other allies to Byzantion, and this may suggest that he had returned to Greece, but there would have been both Megarians and other allies of Sparta among the fugitives from Kyzikos at Antandros. Wherever he had come from, three of his fifteen transports had been destroyed in the Hellespont by Athenian ships stationed there to guard the merchantmen plying through the straits, but the rest had got through. Xenophon, who tells us this (1.1.35), implies that it was in 410, but other possibilities are the first half of 409, before Thrasyllus' arrival, when the Hellespont was only weakly guarded (see above, p. 210), or the early part of 408 when Alkibiades and Thrasyllus joined Theramenes at Chalkedon.³⁶

Alkibiades brought his Thracian cavalry and the Chersonesians to Byzantion, as well as his original forces, and the Athenians now settled down to the siege of the city in earnest, cutting it off on the landward side by a stockade, presumably stretching from the Golden Horn to the Propontis. They made frequent assaults on the walls (Xen. 1.3.14; DS 13.66.5–6; Plut., *Alk.* 31.2), but in the end it was treachery that caused the city's downfall, as at Selymbria. Klearchos himself had slipped out across the Bosphoros to collect funds and ships, leaving Helixos and the Boiotian Koiratadas in charge. Perhaps he thought there were enough foreign troops in the city to prevent treachery, and he may in any case have calculated that it was doomed unless he tried something. Some ships had been left in the Hellespont by Pasippidas, presumably at Abydos, others were in the Thraceward region under Agesandridas, and he intended to get yet others built at Antandros. With all these, he hoped to draw the Athenians away from Byzantion by threatening their allies elsewhere. It was a good plan, but somewhat risky, one might think, for an officer whom Xenophon rated so highly (cf. *Anab.* 2.6.6–15), particularly if he had already allowed his harsh character, which Xenophon knew so well, to get the better of him in his dealings with the Byzantines: Xenophon tells us that he had given what food there was to his soldiers, while women and children were dying of starvation (1.3.19). Why, one wonders, did he not send one of his subordinates to get help? As it was, in his absence, the traitors in the city concerted plans with the besiegers.

Xenophon (1.3.20) merely says that they let Alkibiades and his men in by the so-called Thracian Gate, but both Diodoros (13.67) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 31.3–4) describe a more complex operation. According to them, the Athenian fleet ostentatiously withdrew in full daylight, putting it about that there was trouble in Ionia, and the land forces also moved back from the walls. The fleet then returned under cover of darkness and attacked the harbour, making as much noise as possible. When the defenders rushed there, the traitors had the chance to admit the Athenian army by ladders over the walls. Even then a savage fight ensued, with the Peloponnsians and Boiotians first beating off the attack on the harbour, and then putting up a fierce resistance to those who had entered the city from the landward side. But, as we have seen, this was the kind of situation in which Alkibiades was in his element. He had already agreed with the pro-

Athenian faction that no harm should come to the city or any of its inhabitants, and he now had this publicly proclaimed. The Byzantines then turned on Klearchos' troops, most of whom were killed, while those who took sanctuary at the altars were taken prisoner. Later, when they were disembarking at the Peiraieus, the Boiotian commander, Koiratadas, managed to escape by mingling with the crowd and making his way to Dekeleia (Xen. 1.3.22). To the people of Byzantion, as to those at Selymbria, the Athenians kept their word.

According to Diodoros (13.68.1), after taking the city, the Athenian commanders sailed to the Hellespont, where they recovered all the cities in the region not already under their control, except Abydos. They then left adequate forces to watch over the area and sailed for home. Diodoros dates this to the archonship of Euktemon (408/7), and this is consistent with the interpretation of Xenophon's chronology suggested above (p. 208), which puts it in 407 (cf. 1.4.2): in other words, it was in the first half of that year. Xenophon also provides more detail. According to him (1.4.8–11), while Thrasylos took most of the fleet home, Thrasyboulos returned to his old stamping ground in the Thraceward region, where, among other rebel cities, he recovered Thasos, though probably not until much later in the year (see below, p. 220).

Meanwhile, Alkibiades first made for Samos, and then, with twenty ships, for the Gulf of Keramos (now Kerme Korfezi) in Karia. Here, if we are to believe Xenophon (1.4.8), he exacted 100 talents from the local people before returning to Samos, though the area seems too poor to have provided anything like that sum.³⁷ If the text is sound, his success in collecting so much may have been due to his own particular skill in such matters. From Karia, he returned to Samos, and then made for Paros, before sailing south to Gytheion. His purpose, according to Xenophon (1.4.11), was 'to spy on the thirty triremes he heard the Spartans were fitting out there', but also 'to see how the city felt about his return'. It was only when he heard that he had been elected *stratēgos*, and received assurances from his friends, that he finally turned for home (1.4.2).

Diodoros (13.68.2–3) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 32.1) have a different account. According to them, the whole fleet returned together, bringing hundreds of captured vessels, the rams of ones destroyed, crowds of prisoners and spoils of every kind, its own ships extravagantly gilded and garlanded. But even Plutarch dismisses the exaggerations of Douris of Samos (*Alk.* 32.2–3), and since Xenophon was almost certainly in Athens at the time, his account should be accepted. It rings true, and is so vivid that it suggests he was an eyewitness.³⁸

According to Xenophon, Alkibiades sailed into the Peiraieus on the day of the festival known as the Plynteria ('Washing-day'), the date of which is uncertain, but was probably in June (1.4.2). The festival's name referred to the washing of the robes of the ancient wooden statue of Athena Polias ('Guardian of the City'), and was regarded as inauspicious because the statue was covered while the washing took place (Plut., *Alk.* 34.1). In view of his known attitude to the state religion, Alkibiades may have chosen to ignore this, though his diffidence before disembarking hardly suggests he was so cavalier: he would not

even land before he spotted his cousin, Eurypolemos, and other relatives and friends in the crowd (Xen. 1.4.19). More likely, amid all his anxieties, he had simply forgotten what day it was, and if we are to believe Xenophon, it looks as though most Athenians had also forgotten, though some held him responsible for past troubles and feared he might be the cause of more to come (1.4.13–17).

According to Plutarch (*Alk.* 33.1), the decree for his recall from exile had already been passed, on the motion of no less a person than Kritias, the future leader of the Thirty Tyrants, and Thucydides says the Athenians had voted for his recall in 411 (8.97.3). But Xenophon (1.4.10) says he was an exile when elected *stratēgos* in 407, and since the recall in 411 had been voted for by the Five Thousand, it is possible that the restored democracy did not recognize it.³⁹ If so, it may have been at the meeting of the assembly he addressed soon after his return that his recall was finally sanctioned. Xenophon (1.4.20) says he addressed the council first, and that he defended himself before the assembly. Diodoros (13.69.1–3) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 33.3) add that the latter voted that his property be restored and the curses pronounced over him at the time of his exile be revoked.

He was also, now or soon after, given special powers as what our sources call ‘*stratēgos autokrator*’ (Xen. 1.4.20; DS 13.69.3; Plut., *Alk.* 33.2). This possibly means not so much that he was to be ‘commander-in-chief’ as that he was empowered to make decisions that were binding on the state, for example to conclude a peace or an alliance, though the way Diodoros and Plutarch talk suggests the former. There is a parallel in the powers given to Alkibiades himself and his two colleagues, Nikias and Lamachos, in 415 (Thuc. 6.8.2), though the situation in 407 was, of course, different in that these powers were apparently given solely to Alkibiades.⁴⁰ Perhaps the assembly had in mind his diplomatic as much as his military skills. Both Diodoros (13.69.3) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 35.1) say that he was also given colleagues of his own choosing, the former naming them as Adeimantos and ‘Thrasymboulos’, where he should probably have said Thrasyllos. Xenophon confirms that Adeimantos was one of those who sailed with him, and adds that he and Aristokrates were chosen as generals on land.⁴¹

Before he left Athens, Alkibiades made one more dramatic gesture. Ever since the Spartan seizure of Dekeleia, the Athenians had not dared to make their annual pilgrimage to Eleusis in the month Boedromion (August/September), but had gone tamely by sea. Now, clearly in the hope of settling any lingering religious doubts, Alkibiades undertook to escort the procession by land. He stationed lookouts on the hills along the route to give warning of any threat from Dekeleia, and took personal command of the hoplites escorting the priests and other participants (Plut., *Alk.* 33.5–6). It was a triumphant success, symbolizing not only the revival of Athenian power, but also, perhaps, that daring which even the enemies of the Athenians noted (cf., e.g., Thuc. 1.70.2 and 6.33.4).

REARGUARD ACTION

Alkibiades probably left Athens in October 407, shortly after escorting the procession to Eleusis.¹ If so, he had spent several months at home, and although no doubt he had had plenty to do, the delay had given the Spartans and their allies time to regather their strength. Immediately after Kyzikos, at Pharnabazos' urging and with his financial assistance, they had begun to build ships at Antandros (Xen. 1.1.24–6), and there had already been signs of a naval revival. Pasippidas had collected some ships at Chios, and Kratesippidas had added these to the twenty-five he had brought from the Peloponnese in 409 (Xen. 1.1.32; DS 13.65.3). Later, during the siege of Byzantion, as we saw, Klearchos had gone off to collect ships from the Hellespont, the Thraceward region and from Antandros (Xen. 1.3.17). There were also some at Rhodes, and possibly at Kos and Miletos (see below), and the thirty at Gytheion Alkibiades had gone to spy on before returning to Athens (Xen. 1.4.11). Thus, when Lysander, the new Spartan navarch, arrived in the eastern Aegean, probably in the spring of 407,² he could already muster seventy triremes at Ephesos, after picking some up at Rhodes, and calling at Kos and Miletos (Xen. 1.5.21).

Like Gylippos, Lysander was an example of the kind of Spartan to whom the war was an opportunity for an advancement which would probably have been denied them in more normal times. According to Phylarchos (*FGH* 81F43), he was a *mothax*, that is to say a man of non-citizen status who had been brought up with the sons of some wealthy patron, and had subsequently achieved citizenship.³ This is consistent with Plutarch's statement (*Lys.* 2.1) that, though claiming descent from Herakles, as did the Spartan royal families, his own immediate family was poor, and it is possible that his patron either belonged to or was close to the Eurypontid royal house.⁴ We know nothing of his earlier career, but, although he may have had some experience, patronage is enough to explain his startling elevation. As it turned out, it was abundantly justified.

Another change which took place at about this time was the arrival at Sardis of the Persian prince Cyrus, second son of King Darius II. Born after his father's accession in the autumn of 424 (Ktesias, *FGH* 688F15), he can have been no more than sixteen years old, but he had been given command of 'all the men on the coast', and bore a letter with his father's seal appointing him, in official

terminology, ‘*Karanos* of those who muster at Kastolos’, which appears to mean commander-in-chief of the Persian armed forces in western Asia Minor.⁵ He certainly seems to have had authority over both Pharnabazos and Tissaphernes (Xen. 1.4.5 and 1.5.8–9).

He appears to have reached Sardis some time after Lysander’s arrival at Ephesos, and the Spartan made it his business to pay him a visit as soon as possible. He was accompanied by the Spartan envoys who had returned with Cyrus from their successful mission to the king, and who had presumably brought the news of the prince’s arrival (Xen. 1.5.1). Lysander was probably now in his forties and may have become something of a father-figure to the younger man. He had possibly chosen Ephesos as his base rather than Miletos because he wanted to be in easier communication with Sardis, and perhaps, too, to dissociate himself from the anti-Persian attitude of the Milesians.⁶ Ephesos being north of Samos, it would also be easier to reach Chios, Lesbos and the Hellespont from there than from Miletos.

The Spartan delegation began by denouncing Tissaphernes and urging Cyrus to prosecute the war as vigorously as possible. Responding that this was both what he had been instructed to do and his intention, the prince declared that he had 500 talents, and, with what appears to have been typical Persian exaggeration (cf. Thuc. 8.81.3), that if this and his own money were not enough, he would turn his gold and silver throne into cash (Xen. 1.5.3). He refused to agree to raising the daily wage for each sailor to one *drachma* as the Spartans urged, since it was contrary to the king’s orders and previous agreements. But, at a subsequent banquet, when Lysander told him nothing would please him more than the addition of one obol to each sailor’s pay, he agreed (Xen. 1.5.4–7). The point was, as the Spartans had argued, that paying more than the Athenians would encourage their foreign oarsmen to desert.

By arriving earlier, Alkibiades might have been able to nip this growing rapport between the Spartans and the Persians in the bud. If it came to charming Cyrus, after all, one would have thought he would have had the edge over Lysander, and he also initially had more ships, since he left Athens with 100 (1.4.21). As it was, however, he did not even go directly to Samos. On the way, he attacked Andros, which was in revolt. We do not know when the revolt took place, but Andrian hoplites had helped the Four Hundred to establish themselves (Thuc. 8.69.3), and this may have been one of the places where the Athenian oligarchs had helped people like themselves to seize power. Later, it may have opted for freedom, with Spartan help, as Thasos had done (cf. Thuc. 8.64.2–5): Xenophon mentions ‘Lakonians’ among those killed in the battle outside the main town (1.4.22; cf. DS 13.69.4 and Plut., *Alk.* 35.1).

In Xenophon’s account (1.4.22–3), Alkibiades disembarks his army at Gaurion (now Gávrio), on Andros’ west coast, some 10 miles (16 kilometres) north of the main city (now Paleópolis), routs the Andrians who come out against him, killing a few and the Lakonians present, and pens the rest up in the city. Then, after remaining a few days, he sails for Samos. Diodoros, however, says he fortified

Gaurion, and after his victory over the Andrian and Peloponnesian forces in the field, launched several assaults on the city (13.69.4–5), and this is confirmed by Plutarch (*Alk.* 35.1). Thus, if these later sources are to be believed, he probably spent more than Xenophon's 'few days' on the island. Diodoros also says he left a garrison in Gaurion, under 'Thrasyboulos' (i.e., probably, Thrasyllus; see above, p. 198). Since Xenophon later says Konon brought twenty ships from Andros (1.5.18), he may also have been left there by Alkibiades, although he might have been subsequently sent.⁷ Finally, Diodoros has Alkibiades ravage Kos and Rhodes, after leaving Andros, to collect funds.

Once he reached Samos and learned of the growing *rapprochement* between the Spartans and Persians, it was probably Alkibiades who sent the envoys whom Xenophon says 'the Athenians' sent (1.5.8) to Cyrus. To try diplomacy would be in keeping with Alkibiades' way of thinking, and the fact that Xenophon says (1.5.9) the ambassadors were sent 'through Tissaphernes' is suggestive. If we are to believe him, Tissaphernes was still giving the advice advocated by Alkibiades (cf. Thuc. 8.46) to let the two Greek powers wear each other out. But, although Cyrus outwardly still treated Tissaphernes with respect, inwardly he probably already hated him, and he refused to see the Athenian envoys.

Alkibiades will also have realized that time was on the enemy's side. The only way to bring Athens victory was to destroy the Spartan fleet before it grew too strong, and to do that he had to lure it out to sea. With this in mind, he offered battle off Ephesos, according to Diodoros (13.71.1), and when Lysander refused the challenge headed for Notion, the port of Kolophon, about 8 miles (13 kilometres) to the northwest. Xenophon does not mention this and some have supposed a lacuna in his text, since, having said that Alkibiades made Samos his base (1.4.23), he next has his fleet based at Notion (1.5.11–12),⁸ but there is no reason to doubt Diodoros.

Meanwhile, Lysander's strength had increased to ninety ships, which he dragged ashore at Ephesos to dry them out and make essential repairs (Xen. 1.5.10). Since he was last reported as having seventy (Xen. 1.5.1; DS 13.70.2), his strength was already growing, and if Alkibiades had really left twenty of his ships at Andros with Konon, he was already outnumbered. The increase in Lysander's numbers may have been due to the leading Ionians whom Diodoros says (13.70.4) he had summoned to Ephesos after his meeting with Cyrus. But Plutarch (*Lys.* 5.3) puts this after the battle of Notion, and says that Lysander was at the earlier stage afraid of Alkibiades' larger numbers (*Lys.* 4.5).

At this point Alkibiades made a fatal blunder. Leaving his helmsman Antiochos in charge of the fleet, he himself went off to Phokaia, according to Xenophon (1.5.11) and Plutarch (*Lys.* 5.1) – to Klazomenai, according to Diodoros, who may have got his information from the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* (3.41), and who adds that he took the troopships (13.71.1). In his life of Alkibiades (35.4), Plutarch changes his story and says he went to Karia, but this we can ignore as a garbled reference to his earlier visit. It would make sense for Alkibiades to make first for Klazomenai. As Diodoros says, it was an ally of Athens – one of the few remaining

in Ionia – and suffering from attacks by exiles based nearby (cf. Thuc. 8.31.2–4). From there he could easily have crossed the Gulf of Smyrna (Izmir Körfezi) to Phokaia. His strategy was probably to try to force Lysander to leave the safety of Ephesos by threatening Sparta's allies to the north, and it may have been concerted with Thrasyboulos, who, he had heard, had arrived from the Hellespont to fortify Phokaia (Xen. 1.5.11).⁹ Thrasyboulos had previously been with thirty ships in the Thraceward region, where he had subdued some of Athens' rebel allies, including Thasos (Xen. 1.4.11). Diodoros (13.72.2) adds Abdera, but puts these events after Notion, and gives Thrasyboulos only fifteen ships. Presumably he had subsequently moved to the Hellespont.

But Alkibiades' plans depended on Antiochos' doing what he was told. His appointment as commander of the fleet in Alkibiades' absence was unusual, and foolish if Diodoros (13.71.2) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 35.5) are right about his character. But they were writing with hindsight, and Alkibiades had known Antiochos all his adult life, if a story Plutarch tells (*Alk.* 10.1) is true. Helmsmen had to be expert and experienced sailors, and one would have expected an admiral's to be one of the best. If Konon had been left at Andros, and Aristokrates and Adeimantos had accompanied Alkibiades and the land forces, as is suggested by their job description (Xen. 1.4.21) and Diodoros' statement that Alkibiades had taken the troopships (13.71.1), there would have been no *stratêgos* left to command the fleet. A senior trierarch could have been given the job, but Antiochos may have seemed more suitable, precisely because he was less likely to try anything. There certainly do not seem to have been any objections to his appointment.

What then went wrong?¹⁰ Xenophon (1.5.11–14), who is broadly followed by Plutarch (*Alk.* 35.5–6, *Lys.* 5.1–2), says Alkibiades had left Antiochos with orders not to attack Lysander, but that with his own and one other ship he sailed into the harbour of Ephesos, rowing past the prows of Lysander's ships. At first, Lysander simply launched a few to chase off the intruders, but when more came to Antiochos' aid he brought all his ships into action. The Athenians then launched their remaining ships, and the result was a general *mêlée* in which the scattered Athenians were routed by the better-organized Spartans, with the loss of fifteen ships, though most of the crews escaped. Plutarch adds that Antiochos made insulting gestures and shouted insults as he cruised past the prows of the enemy ships, and that he was killed in the fighting.

Diodoros (13.71.2–4) says Antiochos manned his ten best ships, and, telling the trierarchs to keep the rest ready, challenged the enemy to fight. Lysander, who knew about Alkibiades' departure with his land forces, put to sea with all his ships, caught and sank Antiochos' ship, the leading one of the ten, and then pursued the others until the remaining Athenians came out to the rescue in disorder. In the ensuing battle the Athenians lost twenty-two ships, but most of their crews swam safely to shore. This version appears to be based on the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* (4.1–4), which, like Diodoros, give Antiochos ten ships and say the Athenians eventually lost twenty-two. But the *Hellenika* also seem to provide a

rational explanation for Antiochos' behaviour, which neither Xenophon nor Diodoros does. They hint that Lysander had been in the habit of sending out three ships, perhaps to see what the Athenians were up to, as he was to do later before Aigospotamoi (see below, p. 241), and that Antiochos planned to lure them on to his squadron by challenging them first with only one or two of his ships. Spotting his approach, Lysander launched his usual three ships and these caught and sank Antiochos' own ship. Seeing this, his remaining ships fled, with Lysander's entire fleet in hot pursuit. Thereafter, the account is much the same as Xenophon's except for the different figure for the Athenian losses.

There is no way of deciding between Xenophon and the *Hellenika* on the number of ships the Athenians lost, though one is inclined to accept the latter because of the general superiority of their version. But did Antiochos fall into a trap of Lysander's making, or did he plan a trap of his own which went wrong? Diodoros, as we saw, says Lysander knew of Alkibiades' departure, and he adds that he 'decided the time had come to do something worthy of Sparta' (13.71.3). Pausanias goes further. He says (9.32.6) Lysander 'waited until Alkibiades was away from the fleet and then induced Antiochos to hope that he was a match for the Spartans at sea'.

In favour of the view that Lysander was up to something is the speed with which he launched his fleet, after sending out his first three ships. He clearly did not need all his ships to chase a mere ten enemy vessels.¹¹ On the other hand, it is difficult to see how he could have anticipated Antiochos' behaviour, whereas, with the clues provided by the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia*, we can at least understand how Antiochos came to act as he did. He was still guilty of disobeying Alkibiades' orders, but at least he did not behave in the totally irrational way suggested by Xenophon, Diodoros and Plutarch.

Xenophon (1.5.14–15) says the Athenians returned to Samos immediately after their defeat, and were joined there by Alkibiades, but it is more likely that they waited for Alkibiades at Notion, as Diodoros says (13.71.4), and the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* confirm, saying they waited three days. Alkibiades was shrewd enough to realize what an impact the defeat might have on public opinion, and both Diodoros (13.74.4) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 35.6) comment on the swiftness of his return once he heard the news. They and Xenophon also all say that he immediately offered battle again, but that Lysander refused to be drawn. Baffled, Alkibiades then withdrew to Samos (Xen. 1.5.15).

According to Xenophon (*loc. cit.*), Lysander's refusal to fight was because he was outnumbered 'by many ships', but even on his own figures it is not easy to see how this can have been true. Assuming that he had not been able to man any of the captured Athenian ships in the time available, and had not lost any of his own, Lysander still had 90 (1.5.10). Alkibiades had left Athens with 100 (1.4.21), but had lost 15 (1.5.14), and so should have had only 85. Perhaps we should assume that Xenophon thought he had added Thrasyboulos' ships to his own, though he does not say so, and that these numbered 30 (cf. 1.4.9). In reality, however, Lysander may have had more ships than his opponent. If the latter had

left 20 of his original 100 at Andros with Konon (cf. Xen. 1.5.18), and had lost 22, he only had 88, even if he had been joined by Thrasyboulos' 30. But, in any case, no Spartan admiral, and least of all, one suspects, Lysander, would have wanted to fight 85, let alone 88, Athenian ships with only 90 of his own.

When the news reached Athens, according to Xenophon (1.5.16–17), the Athenians, thinking Alkibiades had lost the ships through his own carelessness and dissolute behaviour, furiously chose other generals, and Alkibiades, who was unpopular even with the armed forces, took one trireme and sailed away to his strongholds in the Chersonese. It is not clear whether Xenophon means he was actually deposed or simply failed to be re-elected, but Lysias (21.7), in a speech written for the captain of the ship on which Alkibiades had sailed to Ionia, implies that he and his colleagues were deprived of their commands, and both Nepos (*Alc.* 7) and Plutarch (*Lys.* 5.2) talk unequivocally of their being removed from office, the latter using the Athenian technical term (*aphecheirotônêsan*). In his life of Alkibiades (36.1), Plutarch names Thrasyboulos, son of Thraso – not the famous Thrasyboulos, whose father's name was Lykos – as the chief accuser. In any case, the elections for the generalship of 406/5 followed shortly afterwards, and Alkibiades was certainly not one of those elected.¹²

Xenophon does not give any reasons for his deposition, apart from what had happened at Notion, but the later sources add a whole catalogue of charges. Diodoros, in particular, says that after withdrawing to Samos, he attacked Kyme, falsely accusing its people, presumably of being disloyal. This led to yet another failure when the indignant townsfolk and those from the countryside fell on him when he was taking his prisoners back to his ships. The Kymaïans then sent envoys to Athens to denounce him, and he was also accused by some of his men of favouring the Spartan cause and of being on too friendly terms with Pharnabazos in the hope of lording it over the Athenians when the war was over (13.73.3–6). Plutarch says Thrasyboulos, son of Thraso, made even more lurid accusations (*Alk.* 36.1–2), which show vividly how leaving Antiochos in command while he went elsewhere could be misinterpreted. Alkibiades, Thrasyboulos declared, had handed over his command to men who had won his confidence with their ability to drink and tell sailors' yarns, while he went off to collect money, get drunk and enjoy the courtesans of Abydos and Ionia.

Diodoros' main source, Ephoros, came from Kyme, and had a habit of introducing local traditions into his history, but there is no particular reason to doubt this one, and the rest of the accusations ring true as the kind of wild exaggerations which were habitually used by a man's political enemies in Athens. Thus what Thrasyboulos said was clearly a distorted version of the real reasons why Alkibiades left his fleet before Notion. As Plutarch says (*Alk.* 35.3), when facing an enemy who had as munificent a benefactor as the king of Persia, he had no option but to go looking for supplies and funds. As for the charge of attacking allies, the Kymaïans had given shelter to the Spartan fleet in the winter of 412/11 (Thuc. 8.22.1 and 31.3–4), and in 411 some of their hoplites had been used against Athenian interests on Lesbos (Thuc. 8.100.3). Much had happened

since 411, and they might well have returned to their allegiance to the Athenians, but their attitude might still have lent plausibility to Alkibiades' accusations. In general, Plutarch percipiently remarks, Alkibiades' reputation was his undoing. He was expected to succeed, and when he failed people suspected it was because he could not be bothered (*Alk.* 35.2).

Athenian attitudes may also have been affected by an incident mentioned by Diodoros. When Agis learned that some of Athens' best troops had left with Alkibiades, he made a daring night march right up to the walls of the city. Next day there was a cavalry skirmish, with Agis' army looking on from only about 1,000 yards (914 metres) away, and the population of the city watching from the walls. Despite the presence of Boiotian cavalry with Agis' army, the Athenians won, but the king then camped at the Academy less than a mile (1.5 kilometres) from the city, and on the following day again deployed his army for battle. The Athenians accepted the challenge, but drew up so near the walls that when Agis advanced, he came under fire from them and withdrew (13.72.3–73.1–2).

Diodoros is the sole source for this incident, and it is possible that it is a doublet of the similar raid which Thrasylos beat off in 410 (Xen. 1.1.33–4), and which Diodoros does not mention. But the details are different, and there is no compelling reason to doubt what Diodoros says, though it is doubtful whether the Spartans and their allies would have drawn up four deep to watch the cavalry battle as he says (13.72.6): the normal depth was eight, or even deeper in the case of Thebans (cf., e.g., Thuc. 5.68.3 and 4.93.4). Nothing came of the incident, but if it occurred, it would have been an alarming reminder to the Athenians of just how near they were to disaster, and might have made them less inclined to overlook what had happened at Notion.

It is natural to wonder what might have happened had Alkibiades stayed in command. Plutarch (*Alk.* 38.1) says that when the war was over the Athenians regarded their 'second outburst of anger' against him as the worst mistake they had made. But he was writing a biography and half a millennium later. More interesting is the implication in Aristophanes' play *The Frogs* that the question was already being discussed in Athens within a year of Alkibiades' disgrace. There Dionysos says 'the city is having a hard time with the issue' (*dustokei*: line 1423), and when Euripides asks what it thought about Alkibiades, Dionysos replies, 'it yearns for him, hates him, and wants to have him' (line 1425). Thucydides, too, says that his military conduct was excellent (6.15.4), and possibly thought that even the Sicilian expedition might have succeeded, had he been left in command (cf. 2.65.11).¹³

Modern opinion used to be, in general, that his deposition was fatal to Athenian chances,¹⁴ but more recently there has been a tendency to belittle his achievements and to stress what a divisive influence he was.¹⁵ Basically, it comes down to whether one thinks the Athenians needed a man with military abilities or someone with a talent for diplomacy and intrigue. If the former, although he had the right idea in trying to match the Spartans on land in the years from 420 to 418, his advocacy of the Sicilian expedition was disastrous, and unless it was

he who devised the tactics that won Kyzikos, there is nothing in his record to suggest he had outstanding military ability. But if the skills of an intriguer were wanted, he showed what he could do in his dealings with Tissaphernes and, in a different context, at Selymbria and Byzantion. Only a man of his peculiar talents, one feels, might have been able to drive a wedge between the Spartans and the Persians even now, and, in the end, that is the only way the Athenians could have won.

Xenophon implies that he left Samos before Konon arrived to replace him, and both Nepos (*Alc.* 7.4) and Plutarch (*Alk.* 36.3) say he left as soon as he heard of his removal from office. Diodoros (13.74.2) implies that he waited to hand over his command, but this is unlikely. He will have wanted to get away as quickly as possible to avoid any possibility of arrest. Xenophon (1.5.17) simply says he fled to his strongholds in the Chersonese, but Diodoros (13.74.2) and Nepos (*Alc.* 7.4) specify his initial destination as Paktye, some 28 miles (45 kilometres) northeast of Sestos, though the latter and Plutarch (*Alk.* 36.2) mention three other places: Ornoi, Neonteichos and Bizanthe. Probably he had a number of strongholds, and he made himself useful fighting 'the Thracians without a king' on behalf of the more Hellenized Thracian kings and their Greek neighbours (Nepos, *Alc.* 7.4–5; Plut., *Alk.* 36.3).

Meanwhile, Konon, on his way from Andros to Samos, captured two Thourian ships, commanded by Dorieus, and released him without ransom, though the Athenians had long ago sentenced him to death (Xen. 1.5.19). This was unusually generous, but perhaps Konon hoped Dorieus would turn pro-Athenian in gratitude and win back his native Rhodes to the Athenian cause. At Samos, Konon found a discouraged fleet, and, manning only seventy ships out of the more than one hundred he had, set off on a series of plundering raids (Xen. 1.5.20). It has been suggested that he was forced to reduce the size of his fleet by desertion due to the higher rate of pay being offered by the Spartans (cf. Plut., *Lys.* 4.4; Xen. 1.5.4), and this could be true, even though Xenophon later says he selected the best oarsmen for his fewer ships (1.6.16): this does not necessarily mean he still had enough oarsmen for all of them.¹⁶ That he immediately went out on plundering raids shows that at least in this respect Alkibiades had been forced to act as he did, whatever the Athenians might think.

Notion was almost certainly fought at the very end of 407 or early in 406,¹⁷ and Alkibiades' departure would have followed fairly soon afterwards. Almost certainly, too, Lysander's term as navarch came to an end in spring 406.¹⁸ He was superseded by Kallikratidas (Xen. 1.6.1; DS 13.76.2), who, like Lysander and Gylippos, was a *mothax*, if we can believe Aelian (*VH* 12.43). If so, since he was clearly not on friendly terms with Lysander and his policy also differed in some respects, it is tempting to suppose that he was the protégé of a different group. As we saw (above, p. 217), there is some reason to believe that Lysander was associated with the Eurypontid royal house, and it is possible that Kallikratidas was close to the other one, the *Agiadai*. The current king of that house, Pausanias, had come to the throne in 408, and was certainly later to prove an opponent of

Lysander. In 403, he was responsible for the reversal of Lysander's policy towards Athens (Xen. 2.4.29–39), and eight years later was sentenced to death *in absentia*, probably unjustly, for failing to support Lysander in Boiotia (Xen. 3.5.25). Like his father, Pleistoanax, he was in favour of détente with the Athenians, and it is possible that this is reflected in Kallikratidas' alleged wish to reconcile the Spartans with them (Xen. 1.6.7).

The hostility between him and Lysander emerged as soon as he arrived. When Lysander boasted that he was handing over as 'master of the sea and victor in battle', Kallikratidas told him to sail from Ephesos past Samos, where the Athenians were, and hand over at Miletos, then he would agree that he was master of the sea. To this Lysander weakly responded that he was not in the habit of meddling in someone else's command (Xen. 1.6.2–3).

More seriously, Xenophon says Kallikratidas learned that some of Lysander's friends were only grudgingly carrying out his orders and were putting it about that changing admirals like this courted disaster, since those appointed were inevitably inexperienced (1.6.4).¹⁹ It is usually supposed that the 'friends' in question were Lysander's partisans in the Ionian states,²⁰ and Xenophon does say that Kallikratidas believed that it was all happening 'in the cities' (1.6.4). But the sequel suggests that the actual 'friends' were Spartans, even if they spread their slanders among the Ionians, for it was 'the Lakedaimonians' Kallikratidas decided to confront (*loc. cit.*). If Xenophon's account is accurate, the way he did it also shows that, although he may have been young and inexperienced, as Diodoros says (13.76.2), he was certainly no fool. Assembling, presumably, the officers and other leading men among the Spartans,²¹ he blandly told them he was willing to stand down and asked their advice as to whether he should stay or go home and report the situation (Xen. 1.6.5). This effectively took the wind out of their sails, since no one dared to tell him to do anything but carry out his orders.

He had already gathered fifty ships from Chios, Rhodes and other allies, in addition to the ninety he had taken over from Lysander (Xen. 1.6.3), but now he had the problem of paying for their crews. In what looks like a final act of sabotage, Lysander had returned the funds he still had in hand to Cyrus, and now Kallikratidas was forced to go to Sardis to ask for money (Xen. 1.6.10; Plut., *Lys.* 6.1). More humiliating still, Cyrus kept him waiting for two days. This was the last straw. Furious, he returned to Ephesos, and, in what was clearly a deliberate attempt to dissociate himself from Lysander's policy, took the fleet back to Miletos. There he sent to Sparta for funds, and in the meantime made a stirring and successful appeal to the Milesians for financial help. In addition, he received five *drachmai* for each of his sailors from Chios, perhaps when he went there to attack the Athenian post at Delphinion (Xen. 1.6.6–12).

Xenophon (1.5.15) puts this after Notion, and couples it with an attack on Eion. But the latter can hardly be right, and Diodoros is almost certainly correct in associating the attack on Delphinion with Kallikratidas and coupling it with one on Teos (13.76.3–4). If the attack on Delphinion had taken place under

Lysander's command, one would have expected the sources to say so. Dismayed at the size of Kallikratidas' fleet, according to Diodoros (13.76.4), the 500-strong garrison of Delphinion agreed to evacuate it under truce, and it was razed to the ground. Assuming that Diodoros has these operations in the right order, Kallikratidas then doubled back to Teos, and, after infiltrating the walls at night, contented himself with plundering the place. The raid may have been partly intended to divert attention from the real objective, for he now headed north again for Lesbos, and, in particular, for Methymna, Athens' most loyal ally on the island. Xenophon (1.6.13) says Kallikratidas took it by storm after it had refused to come over, since it had an Athenian garrison and those in power were pro-Athenian. But Diodoros (13.76.5) claims that it was taken by treachery after repeated assaults.

Both sources are agreed, however, that Methymna was treated with reasonable generosity. Lack of funds dictated that Kallikratidas take what booty he could, including slaves, and he sold the Athenian garrison. But he spared the lives of the Methymnaians themselves, despite his allies' demands, declaring that while he was in command he would do his best to see that no Greek was enslaved – presumably, for the time being, Athenians did not count. He also appears to have granted the Methymnaians their autonomy, though no doubt now under a pro-Spartan, and, presumably, oligarchic regime (Xen. 1.6.14–15; DS 13.76.5). This was in keeping with his evident desire to return to the ideal of 'freedom for the Greeks' with which the Spartans had entered the war.

After this success, he ordered the Spartan Thorax to march on Mytilene as quickly as possible with the land forces, while he sailed there with the fleet (DS 13.76.6). Meanwhile, Konon had set out to Methymna's aid, but on learning that it had already fallen put in for the night at one of the so-called 'Hundred Isles' (now the Alibey Adast), off the mainland north of Mytilene (DS 13.77.2). It was possibly here that he received Kallikratidas' insulting message that he would stop the Athenian 'committing adultery with the sea' (Xen. 1.6.15), presumably implying that he, Kallikratidas, was its lawful husband.

Kallikratidas probably spent the night somewhere on the coast of Lesbos between Methymna and Mytilene, and when, at dawn, both fleets put to sea attempted to prevent Konon escaping to the south. But Konon spotted him in time, and, realizing that he could not fight a fleet at least twice the size of his own, made for Mytilene. His picked oarsmen now stood him in good stead, though Kallikratidas still managed to reach the harbour at almost the same time (Xen. 1.6.16). What happened next in Xenophon's account is unclear because his text is defective. It appears to say that, although Konon arrived first, he was prevented from doing something by the 'citizens' and was compelled to fight near the harbour, losing thirty ships, though their crews escaped. He then dragged his remaining forty ships ashore under the walls (1.6.17), while Kallikratidas anchored his fleet in the harbour, blocking the exit. He also ordered Methymna to send its full forces and brought over troops from Chios (1.6.18). Presumably, too, Thorax arrived with his men (cf. DS 13.76.6).

Mytilene had two harbours formed by what was then an island, lying close offshore, though it is now joined to the mainland (see above, p. 50). The larger, northern harbour was protected by a breakwater, and was connected to the smaller, southern harbour by a channel between the island and the mainland. The smaller harbour, which was enclosed within the city, was still capable of holding fifty triremes (Strabo 13.2.2).²² It has been suggested, therefore, that Konon entered the northern harbour and then tried to sail through the channel to the southern harbour, but was prevented from doing so by the citizens of Mytilene.²³ Although this, perhaps, involves too much of an assumption about what the text originally said, and it is not certain that the channel was navigable, it is borne out by Diodoros' account of Kallikratidas' attack on 'the harbour', as opposed to 'the harbour in the city' (see below). An alternative scenario has Konon make for the southern harbour and the battle take place at its mouth, but this is incompatible with Diodoros.

Diodoros (13.77.2–78.3) also adds more details about the fight outside the harbour, which, although not irreconcilable with Xenophon's account, put a different slant on Konon's actions. In the first place, he gives the Spartans only 140 ships, and this is probably right: Xenophon's figure of 170 (1.6.16) surely represents the 140 they originally had (1.6.3) plus the 30 they captured at Mytilene itself (1.6.17). But Diodoros also says Konon planned, by sailing out to sea, to draw some of the enemy after him and engage them off Mytilene. He therefore set out at a leisurely stroke, tempting the Spartans to catch him. They took the bait and set off in pursuit, their leading ships increasing the beat and not only tiring their oarsmen but becoming separated from the rest. At a given moment, Konon raised a crimson flag, and his ships turned to attack. Kallikratidas' ships hastily formed line, but, being in some confusion, could not prevent the Athenians at first gaining the upper hand. Some of the Spartan ships were damaged, others had oars sheared off, and the Athenian left wing in particular put the enemy to flight and set off in pursuit. Konon, however, presumably commanding the right, now realized just how many ships the enemy had, and broke off his pursuit in time, escaping to Mytilene with forty ships. The remaining thirty were cut off from Mytilene, but managed to run ashore so that at least their crews escaped.

We cannot be sure that this is true, but the details are convincing, and, if true, it gives a good idea of how skilfully handled triremes could exploit their manoeuvrability. It is also one of the very few passages in which shearing off opponents' oars is recorded (13.78.1). It is a little hard to believe that Konon would have been prepared to fight even a limited engagement against so much larger a fleet, but Athenians had been bold before, and he might have thought the risks were slight if all his trierarchs did as they were told. It was his left's overboldness in pursuit that led to his defeat, and he could hardly have catered for this except by issuing strict orders, which he no doubt did.²⁴

Konon was now blockaded by land and sea, and Kallikratidas' successes evidently so impressed Cyrus that he decided to give him his financial support

after all (Xen. 1.6.18), though Plutarch says the Spartan rejected money sent to himself (*Mor.* 222e). From this Xenophon passes straight to Konon's attempt to get a message to Athens, but Diodoros describes an attack by Kallikratidas on what appears to be the northern harbour (13.78.4–79.7).

According to him, Konon had anticipated a siege and taken steps to block the harbour's entrance, sinking boats filled with stones in the shallower places, and anchoring merchantmen, with rocks apparently hauled up to the yardarms, in the deeper. He also had the support of the Mytilineans, including those who had flocked into the city from the surrounding fields (13.78.5). This is not necessarily incompatible with Xenophon, even assuming that his text did originally mention some kind of action hostile to the Athenians by the 'citizens'. Mytilene, like many cities at this time, will have been riven by pro-Athenian and pro-Spartan factions. As recently as 412, a mere nine Chian ships had managed to win it over to the Spartans. It had then been almost immediately recovered by the Athenians (Thuc. 8.23.2; cf. 22.2). It is not at all inconceivable that when Konon first arrived the pro-Spartans managed to prevent his doing something, but that once his men had got ashore, and perhaps when ordinary folk came in from the fields, the pro-Athenians gained the upper hand.

Kallikratidas had disembarked his marines on a beach near the city, which he made his base, but next day he manned his best ships for an assault on the harbour. Konon put some of his troops on his triremes and stationed them with their prows facing the entrance to the harbour. Others he put on board the merchantmen and on the breakwaters on either side. The entrance was too narrow for Kallikratidas to deploy his full strength against the triremes facing it, and his ships faced a barrage of stones from the yardarms of the merchantmen, while his troops were prevented from landing on the breakwaters by the Athenians stationed there.

In the end, it was by boarding the Athenian triremes at the entrance over their bows that the Peloponnesians managed to force their way in. They suffered heavily, particularly from the stones hurled at them from the merchantmen, but they had the advantage of numbers, and when Kallikratidas recalled his first wave he was presumably able to replace it with fresh ships. At last the Athenians broke and fled to 'the harbour in the city' (i.e. the southern one). Kallikratidas triumphantly brought his ships to anchor in the northern harbour, close under the city walls. Diodoros ends with a topographical note on the two harbours which resembles Strabo's (see above, p. 227). Both presumably derive from Ephoros.

It was, then, from the southern harbour that Konon sent his message to Athens. Manning his two fastest ships before dawn with the best oarsmen in the fleet, he sent the marines to the hold and put up the side-screens, presumably to conceal what was going on as much as possible. Since he disembarked their crews after dark, and repeated this for four days, his plan was evidently to make it look as though the two triremes were acting as guard-vessels, not preparing to break out. On the fifth day, he loaded supplies, and at midday, when the blockaders were off their guard and some were having a siesta, he sent off the two ships, one

north, as though making for the Hellespont, the other south. Taken by surprise, the blockaders cut their moorings and went off in disorderly pursuit as each got clear. But instead of chasing both ships, perhaps thinking they could ignore the one heading north, they went after the one heading south and caught it after a long day's row. The other ship escaped and carried the news to Athens (Xen. 1.6.19–22). Since the *stratēgos* Erasinides had been with Konon at the outset (Xen. 1.6.16), and yet fought at Arginousai (1.6.29), he was presumably on board the trireme that escaped.

The crisis brought out all that was best in the Athenians. According to Xenophon (1.6.24), within thirty days they had manned 110 triremes, embarking all males of military age, slave and free, including cavalrymen. They then sailed to Samos, where they were joined by ten Samian ships and more than thirty gathered from elsewhere. Thus, in the end, they had a fleet of more than 150 ships (1.6.25). Diodoros at least arrives at the same total, and has the same number of Samian ships, but he says only 60 were fitted out in Athens and 80 were assembled at Samos 'from the other islands' (13.97.1–2).

There is something to be said for and against both these traditions. On the one hand, it is difficult to believe there were anything like 110 triremes in the Peiraeus dockyards after Alkibiades' departure with 100, and it would have taken more than thirty days to build any significant number. On the other hand, while Diodoros' figure of 60 ships from this source seems reasonable and finds some support from Plato (*Menexenos* 243c), it is difficult to believe 90 could have been gathered from Samos and other islands, whereas Xenophon's forty-plus seems plausible. Konon had left at least 27 at Samos, and possibly 47, and although of these 12 had gone to help him under Diomedon, and 10 had been captured off Mytilene, the other 2 had escaped (Xen. 1.6.22–3). To scrape together another twenty-three-plus, including the ten from Samos, seems not impossible.²⁵

It is also possible that Alkibiades had instituted a crash shipbuilding programme before he left Athens. The fragmentary inscription from the acropolis mentioned above (ML 91=Fornara 161: see p. 202) records a decree, possibly dating to 407/6 and possibly moved by him. The last part appears to honour King Archelaos of Macedonia and his sons for supplying timber and oars, but the first part seems to mention ships being built in Macedonia and sent to Athens. If these interpretations are correct, this may be another illustration of Alkibiades' novel thinking, and might explain how as many as 110 ships could have been fitted out in the Peiraeus. To pay for the new fleet, it is possible that the Athenians decided to use the statue of Victory from the acropolis and the other treasures stored there for the minting of gold and silver coins,²⁶ though melting a statue of Victory at such a time would seem a dubious omen.

Xenophon may also exaggerate the difficulties the Athenians faced in manning their fleet. One hundred and ten triremes would have required 18,700 oarsmen, 1,760 sailors, 1,100 marines and 440 archers, if they had full complements, but there should have been no difficulty in finding the sailors, marines and archers,

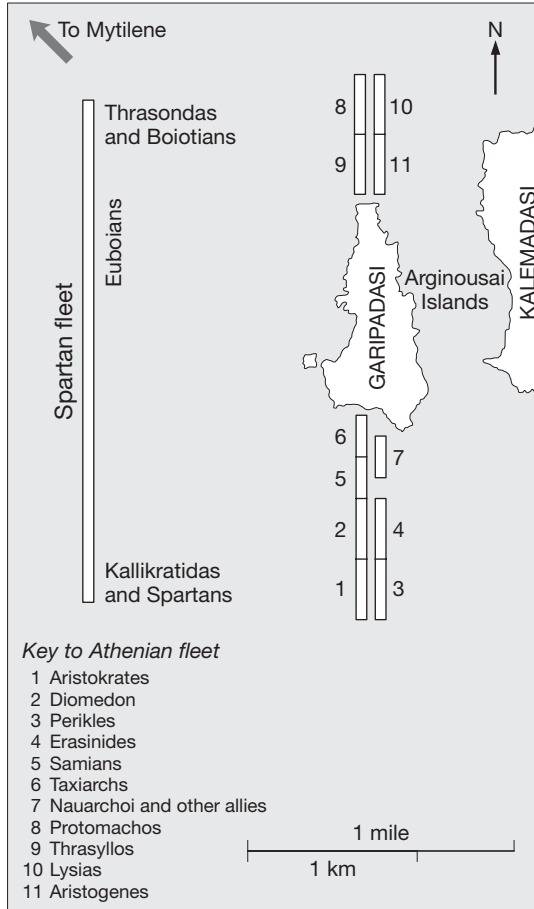
though Xenophon says even members of the cavalry were drafted, presumably as marines.²⁷ It has been calculated that there would also have been enough able-bodied citizens and metics (resident aliens) to provide the oarsmen, and Diodoros (13.97.1) says citizenship was granted to metics and other foreigners willing to serve. But there is good, contemporary evidence in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (lines 693–4), produced in 405, that at least some slaves were enfranchised and given the same status as the Plataians, after fighting in a sea battle, and this is confirmed by a fragment of Thucydides' contemporary Hellanikos of Lesbos (*FGH* 323F25).²⁸

However the Athenians managed to find the ships and the men to man them, it was with a scratch fleet that they set out to fight what Diodoros (13.98.5) says was the greatest sea battle ever fought between Greek and Greek, though if Xenophon's figures are correct, the numbers at Sybota were in fact the same.²⁹ Kallikratidas had to leave an adequate force to cover Konon's 40 ships at Mytilene, and so it was with only 120 of the 170 triremes he had available, according to Xenophon (1.6.26), that he sailed south to Cape Malea, the southeastern tip of Lesbos, where he spent the night. Meanwhile, the Athenian fleet had reached the Arginousai islands (now Garipadasi and Kalemadasi), just over 9 miles (15 kilometres) east of Cape Malea, off the coast of Asia Minor.³⁰

When he saw the Athenian fires, according to Xenophon (1.6.28), Kallikratidas put to sea around midnight, hoping to take the enemy by surprise, but was prevented by a thunderstorm. Diodoros, on the other hand, says the Athenians refused battle when they learned of the enemy's approach, because of the strong winds, apparently on the previous day (13.97.4). There is no reason to doubt either story, and Kallikratidas, in particular, with what he probably realized was a smaller fleet, might have been hoping to catch the Athenians ashore. Diodoros reports dire omens for both sides before the battle, but it may be true that Kallikratidas nominated Klearchos as his successor should anything happen to himself (13.97.4–98.1).

At daybreak on the following day the two fleets put to sea. According to Xenophon (1.6.29–30), the Athenian left stretched out to the open sea, where Aristokrates commanded fifteen ships, with Diomedon to his right with another fifteen. Behind Aristokrates was Perikles, behind Diomedes Erasinides, again each with fifteen ships. Next to Diomedon came the ten Samian ships under Hippeus, in a single line, and next to them the ten 'ships of the taxiarchs', also in a single line.³¹ Behind these were the three ships of the *nauarchoi* and the remaining allied ships, evidently numbering a few more than seven.³² On the extreme right were fifteen ships commanded by Protomachos, with Thrasylllos to his left with another fifteen, and finally, behind Protomachos Lysias, and behind Thrasylllos Aristogenes, also with fifteen ships each.

Each individual squadron will have been in single line abeam, the normal fighting formation, though Xenophon specifies this only in the case of the Samians and the taxiarchs' ships.³³ The unusual double-line formation of the whole fleet he explains as designed not to give the Spartans the chance to



Map 14 Arginousai

use the *diekplous*, ‘for they [the Athenian ships] were the worse sailers’ (1.6.31). They may have been following the example of Herakleides of Mylasa, one of the heroes of the Ionian revolt (cf. Hdt. 5.121). A fragment of the Spartan historian Sosylos refers to the use of a double line by Herakleides at ‘the battle at Artemision’, but this is almost certainly not the famous battle of 480. It is either some unknown battle in the Ionian revolt or, more probably, one between the Carthaginians and the Massiliots off an Artemision in Spain.³⁴

The Spartan ships were all in a single line abeam, ‘prepared’, as Xenophon says (1.6.31), ‘for both the *diekplous* and the *periplous*, for they were the better sailers’. Kallikratidas commanded the right, but, apart from that, Xenophon says nothing of his dispositions. He does, however, say that his helmsman, Hermon of Megara,

urged him to withdraw because the Athenians had many more ships, only to be met with the inevitable Spartan response that such an action would be disgraceful.

Diodoros (13.98.3–5) seems to be in a thorough muddle about the Athenian dispositions. For example, he has Thrasylllos commanding the Athenian right, ignoring Protomachos, and associates Perikles with him, whereas later he says Perikles was rammed by Kallikratidas, who, he says, commanded the Spartan right. He also says that either Thrasylllos or Perikles (the subject is not clear) ‘placed Theramenes beside him on the right wing, and gave him a command, though he was only a private citizen’. This is unlikely in itself, and in Xenophon (1.6.35) both Theramenes and Thrasyboulos are trierarchs. But at least he agrees with Xenophon that Kallikratidas commanded the Spartan right, and it is possible that he is also correct in saying the Boiotians, under Thrasondas, were on the Spartan left.

But the most interesting thing Diodoros says is that either Thrasylllos or Perikles – again the subject is unclear – ‘enclosed the Arginousai islands in his formation so as to extend his ships as far as possible’ (13.98.3), and, consistent with this, that Kallikratidas, ‘being unable to make his line equal to the enemy’s because the islands took up a lot of space, divided his fleet and, forming two squadrons, fought a double battle against each section’. It has been suggested that this means that the two Athenian wings, each consisting of sixty ships, were stationed on either side of the Arginousai islands, with the remaining thirty-plus ships forming a single line in front of them.³⁵ But this is not consistent with either Xenophon or Diodoros. The former says the ships of the *naumarchoi* and the allies were ‘behind’ those of Samos and the taxiarchs, and the latter clearly envisaged the islands splitting the Athenian fleet into two sections.

Nevertheless, there is a problem with Xenophon’s dispositions which Diodoros’ account may help to solve. If both fleets left a similar gap between individual ships, the single Spartan line would have been longer than the double Athenian line by some forty ships, and this would have laid the Athenians open to the *periplous*, the manoeuvre by which one fleet outflanked another.³⁶ They could, of course, have avoided this by leaving a wider gap between their ships than the Spartans, but it is possible that Diodoros preserves the alternative they adopted.³⁷ If so, either the ten Samian ships and those behind them were to the south of the islands, with the taxiarchs’ ships and those behind them to the north, or, since the Athenian left is said to have stretched out into the open sea, the whole of this heterogeneous group was south of the islands.

Unfortunately, Xenophon says almost nothing about the battle itself, other than that it went on for a long time, with the ships at first close together, then scattered. In the end, when Kallikratidas fell overboard and vanished, after his ship had been rammed, and Protomachos and the Athenian right had defeated the Spartan left, the Peloponnesians fled, mostly to Chios and Phokaia, while the Athenians returned to the Arginousai. At this point (1.6.34), he says the Athenians lost twenty-five ships with their crews, though some swam to shore, the Spartans nine out of their own ten ships and more than sixty of their allies’.

Later he has one of the speakers at the trial of the generals (see below, pp. 234–5) say that only twelve Athenian ships were lost (1.7.30), but the higher figure is more plausible and is supported by Diodoros (13.100.3).³⁸

Diodoros adds more detail. He has Kallikratidas ram and sink the ship belonging to a *stratēgos* whose name appears in our text as ‘Nausios’,³⁹ and then go on to disable others or strip them of their oars. Last of all he rams Perikles’ vessel, but his ram sticks fast, Perikles grapples his ship, the Athenians board from all sides, Kallikratidas dies fighting heroically to the last, and the Peloponnesians flee. Meanwhile, the Boiotians and the Euboians next to them, the latter desperate not to fall into Athenian hands, fight on until they see the rest of their fleet in flight, whereupon they, too, flee, some to Chios, some to Kyme (13.99.3–6). The Athenians lose twenty-five ships, as in Xenophon, the Spartans seventy-seven, which is just about reconcilable with Xenophon’s nine Spartan ships and more than sixty of their allies’.

The first part of this is overdramatic, but it is possible that Kallikratidas’ ship broke through the front line of the Athenian left, ‘sinking’ a *stratēgos*’ ship in the process, and was then dealt with by Perikles, commanding the second line. Xenophon has Eurypolemos, in the trial of the generals, refer to a *stratēgos* who survived on a wrecked ship (1.7.32), but if this is the one whose ship was ‘sunk’ by Kallikratidas, his name would have been Aristokrates, not ‘Nausios’ or ‘Lysias’, as it is usually amended, and it is unlikely that the Spartan admiral’s ship managed to disable other ships. Triremes probably could not use their rams more than once or twice without damage to themselves, and shearing off an opponent’s oars would have been a difficult manoeuvre if one was to avoid breaking one’s own. It is certainly possible that the Spartan left fought on until they saw the flight of the right, and the detail that the Euboians were desperate not to fall into Athenian hands rings true.

But neither Xenophon nor Diodoros really explains how the Athenians managed to pull off such a victory, when their ships were ‘the worse sailers’ and the Spartans’ ‘the better’, as Xenophon says (1.6.31). The suggestion that they left wide gaps between the ships of their front line to tempt the Spartans into trying the *diekplous* flies in the face of Xenophon’s assertion that their formation was designed to prevent the *diekplous* (*loc. cit.*). The further suggestion that they were able to outflank both ends of the Spartan line and ‘[force] the enemy into a tightly packed formation where superior seamanship was less important’ is belied, first, by Diodoros’ statement that Kallikratidas took steps to counter this very thing and, second, by Xenophon’s description of the ships in the fight as ‘first close together, and later scattered’ (1.6.33).⁴⁰

Perhaps the thirty or so extra Athenian ships were decisive in a battle which, like most, if not all, ancient sea battles, would have dissolved into a series of ship-to-ship encounters – Xenophon’s second stage, when the ships were scattered. Perhaps the sheer desperation with which the Athenians will have fought turned the tide, for, as Napoleon for one knew, morale is more important than anything else in warfare. The Spartans and their allies may have been dismayed by the sight

of so many Athenian ships when they thought they had what was left of their main fleet bottled up in Mytilene. The fact that the Spartans themselves lost all but one of their own ships, whereas their allies lost only just about half, may indicate a lack of resolve on the allies' part, particularly if most of the allied losses fell on the Spartan left because the Boiotians and Euboians fought on too long and found their retreat cut off. Perhaps we should note that this was the only battle fought in the open sea in this war. This possibly accounts for the lack of mention of 'captured' ships in the sources: did the skill of Athenian helmsmen finally come into its own, despite the fact that in other respects they had the inferior fleet?

Xenophon says (1.6.35) that after the Athenian fleet had returned to the Arginousai, the *stratēgoi* decided to send forty-six ships under the trierarchs Theramenes and Thrasyboulos, and some of the taxiarchs, to the aid of the 'sunken ships and the men on them', while they themselves went to deal with the Spartan squadron blockading Konon at Mytilene. We can ignore the fact that the speaker in the generals' trial referred to above says that forty-seven ships were sent to rescue the survivors, and it is also a minor detail that, whereas Xenophon puts the decision to divide the fleet *after* the return to the Arginousai, Diodoros implies that it was taken before the storm drove them to seek refuge there. Diodoros also says that it was the bodies of the dead that were to be recovered, but agrees that a storm prevented it (13.100.1–3).

Meanwhile, Xenophon says, a tender (*huperētikos kelēs*: 1.6.36) carried the news to Eteonikos, the Spartan commander at Mytilene. He immediately ordered it to go back out to sea without communicating with anyone and return, dressed overall, its crew shouting that Kallikratidas had won a great victory. He then bade his men eat supper, the traders pack their goods and sail off to Chios, and his triremes put to sea as quickly as possible. He himself burned his camp and led his infantry off to Methymna (Xen. 1.6.36–8). Diodoros simply says he heard the news from 'someone', and that he retreated to Pyrrha, which may be right. Pyrrha lay only some 20 miles (32 kilometres) west of Mytilene, on the east coast of the Gulf of Kalloni – its remains are now underwater – and it would have been much easier for Eteonikos to make his way from there to Chios, as he eventually did (Xen. 2.1.1), than from Methymna. Presumably he had ordered his ships to rendezvous with him at whichever place was his own destination. After he had gone, Konon launched his ships and met the rest of the Athenians on their way from the Arginousai. The combined fleet put in at Mytilene, then made for Chios and finally for its base at Samos (Xen. 1.6.38).

Eight *stratēgoi* had commanded at Arginousai and one might have expected them to be fêted and honoured for their great victory. Instead, they were all removed from office and summoned back to Athens on various charges, mainly failure to rescue survivors and/or the bodies of the dead. Two of them prudently decided not to return and fled into exile. Those who did return were all executed after a farcical 'trial' before the assembly. Even if they were partly to blame for what happened after the battle, it was one of the most disgraceful episodes

in Athenian history. Particularly disturbing is the atmosphere of mob rule, exemplified by the shouts in the assembly that it was 'dreadful if anyone did not allow the people to do what it wished' (Xen. 1.7.12).⁴¹

It is difficult to assess what difference the episode made to the course of the war. Modern readers may think, for example, of Stalin's purge of Red Army officers, which also, curiously enough, originally involved eight senior figures, though it later included many more. But it is not at all clear that even the Soviet purge had as devastating an effect on the army's efficiency as is sometimes claimed,⁴² and the Athenian navy was a very different kind of organization. We do not know enough about the previous careers of these *stratēgoi* to be able to say how much their experience and expertise might have been missed. In the one case where we do know something – that of Thrasyllus – one does not have the impression that he was irreplaceable. One effect the trial might have had was to make future *stratēgoi* reluctant to use their initiative.⁴³ But Nikias' case shows that this was already a problem by 413 at the latest, and it is not clear that it became worse in the last two years of the war.

The way the assembly behaved at the trial may explain why it rejected a renewed Spartan offer of peace after the battle, if there was one. It is not mentioned by either of our chief sources, but the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* says that the Spartans offered to evacuate Dekeleia and make peace on the basis of the *status quo* (34.1). Some were eager to accept, but the majority rejected the offer because they were taken in by Kleophon. He came into the assembly drunk and wearing a corslet, and declared that he could not accept unless the Spartans handed over all the cities, presumably meaning all that they had taken from the Athenians.⁴⁴

If this is true, even allowing for exaggeration, it is just the kind of thing we might have expected to happen at a time when any kind of sensible view could be represented as antidemocratic. Was it also foolish? Here, if ever, we must not allow hindsight to cloud our judgement. On the one hand, whereas, after Kyzikos, Byzantion and Chalkedon were still in enemy hands, now the Athenians had recovered them and their lifeline to the Black Sea was relatively safe; they also still had an empire of sorts, even though it was nothing like as extensive as it had once been. Above all, the restoration of peace and the evacuation of Dekeleia would have allowed those of them who lived outside Athens itself and the Peiraieus to return home, and we should remember that these were the majority (cf. Thuc. 2.16). On the other hand, they had lost control of many of the cities in western Asia Minor, and of the important islands of Chios and Rhodes. On Lesbos they still controlled Mytilene, it appears, but not the other cities. Perhaps most important of all, they no longer controlled Euboia and had lost Oropos to the Boiotians.

Strategically speaking, there was something to be said for a period of rest and reorganization, bearing in mind the unusual efforts which had gone into assembling the fleet that had won Arginousai. But such a period would also have allowed their enemies to recover, as they had done after the much worse disaster

at Kyzikos. After all, fifty ships had escaped from Arginousai, and Eteonikos had another fifty at Lesbos. With Persian funds, the Spartans could be expected to have a fleet as big as the Athenians' within months. There was, therefore, good reason for the latter to carry on the war while they were still superior at sea. But whether it was this kind of thinking or suspicion of Spartan intentions or simple megalomania that persuaded the assembly, we do not know. The peace offer may even be unhistorical in any case.

ENDGAME

While the Athenians were indulging in the folly of the generals' trial, and perhaps rejecting a Spartan peace offer, the Spartan Eteonikos had apparently brought his fleet to Chios, and his men were having a hard time for want of pay. They managed to survive through the summer of 406 on seasonal produce and by working for local farmers, but as winter approached, lacking food, clothes and footwear, they concerted a plot to attack the city.

Xenophon tells a curious story about how the plot was foiled (2.1.1–5). When Eteonikos discovered that the plotters were carrying reeds to show how many there were, he was afraid to use force because of the numbers involved and the risk of antagonizing the allies. So he took fifteen men armed only with daggers into the city, where they killed a man coming out of a doctor's surgery carrying a reed. He was suffering from ophthalmia and presumably needed a reed for administering eye-drops. To questions why they had killed the man, his men replied, as instructed, that it was because he was carrying a reed, whereupon everyone else carrying one hastily got rid of it. Eteonikos then summoned a meeting of the Chians and demanded money to pay his men and thus prevent a mutiny. He then gave the signal for embarkation, visited each ship in turn as if he knew nothing of any plot, and handed out a month's pay.

Shortly after this, representatives of Sparta's allies in the east met at Ephesos and decided to send envoys to Sparta to ask for Lysander's reinstatement, many of them presumably being his erstwhile adherents who had helped to make things so difficult for Kallikratidas (cf. Plut., *Lys.* 7.2–4). Cyrus also sent ambassadors with the same request, and this was probably sufficient to carry the day (Xen. 2.1.6; DS 13.100.7; Plut., *Lys.* 7.1). There was a law which forbade holding the navarchy twice, but the Spartans got round this by appointing Lysander 'secretary' (*epistoleus* – in effect, vice-admiral) to the new navarch, Arakos, though in reality it was Lysander who was to be commander-in-chief (Xen. 2.1.7; Plut., *Lys.* 7.2). Diodoros (13.100.8) says he was a private citizen, but this is clearly wrong.

It will have been in the spring of 405 that Lysander returned to Ephesos,¹ bringing with him thirty-five triremes from the Peloponnese (DS 13.104.3). He immediately summoned Eteonikos from Chios with his fleet, collected any other ships that were available, and had yet more built at Antandros (Xen. 2.1.10).

Within a short time he would thus have had more than 130 warships. He had obviously chosen to make Ephesos his base for the same reasons as in 407 (see above, p. 218), in particular for ease of communication with Sardis, and one of his first acts was to visit Cyrus there.

Despite some grumbling that all the money his father had given him had been spent, Cyrus obliged, and Lysander was able to give his men their back pay (Xen. 2.1.11–12; DS 13.104.3; Plut., *Lys.* 9.1). Now or later, Cyrus went even further. He had been summoned to his sick father's bedside, and in his absence seems virtually to have appointed Lysander his viceroy, in particular giving him access to the revenues from his provinces (Xen. 2.1.14; DS 13.104.4; Plut., *Lys.* 9.2). Xenophon says (*loc. cit.*) he also advised him not to fight until he had overwhelming superiority in numbers, advice which may have been prompted by Kallikratidas' attempt to defy the odds, but which one cannot help but feel Lysander, of all people, hardly needed.

According to Diodoros (13.104.5–6), it was at about this time that Milesian oligarchs, with Spartan help, overthrew the existing regime, killing 340 of their opponents and causing about 1,000 more to take refuge with Pharnabazos. Diodoros does not say that Lysander was directly involved, but Plutarch does (*Lys.* 8), though he puts the episode before his first visit to Cyrus. He says that when the oligarchs changed their minds and effected a reconciliation with their opponents, it was Lysander who, while pretending to accept it, secretly urged them to attack the democrats. Worse still, when the revolution began, he entered the city and, by pretending to be angry with the oligarchs, persuaded many of their opponents to stay, only for them to be massacred.

Plutarch does not say Lysander went to Miletos by sea, implying that it was by land (*Lys.* 8.2), so perhaps, at the time, he still did not have a strong enough fleet to risk an encounter with the Athenians. But his next operations, against Iasos (now Kuren) and Kedreiai in Karia (DS 13.104.7; Xen. 2.1.15), certainly involved his fleet, Diodoros in particular saying he took 'most of his ships'. We do not know how many he had, but soon after the battle of Aigospotamoi he is said to have had 200 (Xen. 2.2.5), and he is unlikely to have had fewer than the 180 the Athenians had at the battle (Xen. 2.1.20; DS 13.105.1; Plut., *Lys.* 9.4), particularly if he was heeding Cyrus' advice (cf. Xen. 2.1.14). He might have picked up a few on his roundabout route to the Hellespont (see below), but he probably had a fleet to match the Athenians' when he left Ephesos.

Since we do not know what route he took, it is idle to criticize the Athenians for not bringing him to battle,² but it would be in keeping with their lack of initiative at this time if they let him pass between them and the mainland without interference. Most of them may have been away ravaging Persian territory, and although Xenophon also says they 'sailed against Chios and Ephesos and were preparing for a naval battle' (2.1.16), the bird by then may have flown.

Iasos had been captured by Tissaphernes and the Spartans in winter 412/11 (Thuc. 8.28.2–3), but had perhaps reverted to the Athenians when Alkibiades was in Karia in 407. Lysander massacred all its 800 free adult male inhabitants,

sold the women and children into slavery and razed the city to the ground (DS 13.104.7). The Spartans were not usually guilty of such atrocities, and Lysander may have been deliberately trying to demonstrate the difference between himself and Kallikratidas.³ Alternatively, Iasos may have paid the penalty for its change of allegiance.

Kedreiai lay on a small island (now Sehir Ada or Sehiroglu), off the southeastern coast of the Ceramic Gulf. Its people, including the adult males, were apparently enslaved, the excuse here being perhaps that it was only a semi-Hellenized place (Xen. 2.1.15).

From Kedreiai, according to Xenophon (*loc. cit.*), Lysander made for Rhodes, and from there sailed 'along the Ionian coast' to the Hellespont, his objectives the merchantmen plying the Hellespont and the cities in the region that had revolted from the Spartans (2.1.17). According to Demosthenes (50.4–6), the grain ships came through the Hellespont in the Athenian month Metageitnion (July/August), and presumably Lysander intended to arrive shortly before this.

According to Diodoros (13.104.8), however, after taking Iasos, he sailed to Attica and 'many places' before capturing Lampsakos in the Hellespont, and Plutarch (*Lys.* 9.2–3) says he won over 'some of the islands', overran Aigina and Salamis, and landed in Attica to meet Agis, before he 'fled to Asia by another route through the islands'. Some of this may be due to confusion with his operations after Aigospotamoi (cf. Xen. 2.2.7 and 9), but in one respect it makes more sense than Xenophon's version. If he had really set out 'along the Ionian coast' from Rhodes, one would have thought the Athenians would have heard of it while he was still well south of Samos, whereas Xenophon implies that he was already north of them before they set out 'in the direction of Chios' (2.1.17). But if he had headed northwest from Rhodes towards Attica, they might well have heard nothing for some considerable time.

If Lysander really did go to Attica on his way to the Hellespont, one wonders why. Plutarch (*Lys.* 9.3) implies that he wanted to display his power, and it is possible that he simply wished to frighten the Athenians by co-ordinating operations with Agis. An alternative is that he was trying to lure the Athenian fleet away from Asia Minor by threatening its homeland, to give himself a free run to the Hellespont.⁴ Another possibility is that he wanted to consult with Agis about strategy. It is by no means certain that it was his plan to move to the Hellespont as soon as he had gathered sufficient strength. He had never been further north than Notion during his previous tenure of command, unless it was he who took Delphinion (see above, pp. 225–6), and this time, too, attacks on Iasos and Kedreiai and a move to Rhodes give no hint of a northern strategy. Agis, on the other hand, had shown an interest in intercepting Athenian food supplies at source at least as early as 410 (Xen. 1.1.35: see above, p. 181), and two years before this was already planning to help Lesbos to revolt (Thuc. 8.5.2). It may even have been he who was behind the long-term Spartan strategy of sending forces to the Hellespont. This went back at least to the conference at Corinth in the spring of 412, which he presumably attended (Thuc. 8.8.2).

If we combine the sources, the order of events remains a problem. Did Lysander, for example, go from Iasos to Kedreiai, then to Attica, then back to Rhodes, and finally up the Ionian coast, as has been suggested?⁵ This seems an extraordinarily roundabout way of proceeding, and it is more likely that the visit to Attica, if it is historical, was after the one to Rhodes. After seeing Agis, Lysander would then have doubled back to Asia 'by another route through the islands', as Plutarch says (*Lys.* 9.3), perhaps to his old base at Ephesos, and then up the coast to the Hellespont, as Xenophon says (2.1.17). All the sources are agreed that he reached the Hellespont ahead of the Athenians, though not by much, and, having taken Lampsakos, made it his base (Xen. 2.1.18–19; DS 13.104.8; Plut., *Lys.* 9.4).

When he set out along the Ionian coast, according to Xenophon (2.1.17), the Athenians made for Chios, but sailing out to sea because Asia was hostile to them, and reaching Elaious 'on his heels' (2.1.20). As we have seen, Xenophon implies that this was a response to Lysander's move from Rhodes, but Diodoros says that the Athenians sailed north only when they heard that Lysander was besieging Lampsakos (13.105.1), and Plutarch talks of his hearing that they were pursuing him when he was in Attica – this was the reason why he 'fled by another route through the islands to Asia' (*Lys.* 9.3). Possibly the Athenians followed him to Attica, but missed him, then doubled back to Samos in pursuit and finally set off after him when they heard he had left Ephesos for the Hellespont. One is reminded of Nelson's pursuits of the French fleet before the Nile and Trafalgar.⁶

When they reached Elaious, according to Xenophon (2.1.20), the Athenians learned of Lysander's attack on Lampsakos, and immediately made for their old base at Sestos. Then, having taken supplies on board, they moved up the straits to Aigospotamoi ('Goat's Rivers'), opposite Lampsakos (2.1.21). It is not absolutely certain where Aigospotamoi was. The Hellespont is nowhere in this area only 15 *stadia* (1.7 miles or 2.7 kilometres) wide, as Xenophon says it was at Aigospotamoi. It is narrowest – about 2 miles or 3.3 kilometres wide – opposite the Karakovadere, and some have put Aigospotamoi here, which is almost certainly where Strabo put it (7, fr.55 Loeb), though there is some doubt about his text. Nowadays, a lighthouse guards the narrows, and there is an anchorage, the Inozi Liman, close by. The Karakovadere, however, is hardly 'opposite Lampsakos', as Xenophon says Aigospotamoi was.

'Opposite Lampsakos' there is a stream, the Büyükdere, which may be Aigospotamoi, the plural form of the ancient name reflecting, perhaps, the junction of the main stream with another, now the Kozladere, shortly before it reaches the Hellespont. Here the latter is nearly 3 miles (4.5 kilometres) wide, but since, presumably, the Athenians above all wanted to keep a close watch on the enemy, this was probably the site of their base. If this is right, it was an open beach, possibly with an adequate water supply from the river (though one should remember that this was the summer), but with no town near by large enough to supply food for the 36,000 men manning the 180 Athenian triremes (cf. Xen.

2.1.20). The nearest place of any size was Sestos, about 12 miles (19 kilometres) to the southwest.⁷

The disadvantages of Aigospotamoi were presumably obvious to the Athenian commanders and one wonders why they chose it. The main reason, as suggested above, was probably simply to keep an eye on the enemy. But it would also have been difficult for triremes to row up the Hellespont from anywhere to the southwest, such as Sestos, and there was nowhere suitable beyond Lampsakos to the northeast. The prevailing wind in summer is from the northeast, and although prevailing winds do not blow all the time, there is also a current flowing down the Hellespont at about 1 knot by the shore and faster out in the channel, increasing if the prevailing wind is blowing.⁸ Triremes could undoubtedly beat such a current – the modern reconstruction can cruise at over 5 knots⁹ – but to row any distance against it – and possibly the wind – would have been tiring, and tired oarsmen were the last thing one wanted when about to fight a battle.

With two great fleets in such close proximity, a battle was to be expected at any moment, but the sources are agreed that there was a delay of several days. According to Xenophon, each day Lysander ordered his men aboard after breakfast, putting up the side-screens, as though preparing for battle, but issuing strict instructions not to move (2.1.22). Each day the Athenians rowed across the straits to offer battle, but, when the enemy made no move, returned to their base, followed by three of Lysander's fastest ships, with orders to watch them disembark and report back to him (2.1.22–4). Diodoros (13.105.2) broadly agrees, but without the details. Plutarch (*Alk.* 36.4; *Lys.* 10.1–3) clearly follows Xenophon, but with some additional flourishes, emphasizing the strict discipline observed by Lysander's fleet and the carelessness of the Athenians, who affected to despise the enemy.

This went on for four days, if Xenophon is to be believed (2.1.24; cf. Plut., *Lys.* 10.3),¹⁰ the tedium being broken only by a visit to the Athenian fleet by Alkibiades. According to Xenophon (2.1.25), he told its commanders that they were moored in a poor location and advised them to move to Sestos, from where he saw they were getting their provisions. If this was all he said, one can understand the commanders' irritation (2.1.26; cf. Plut., *Alk.* 37.1–2; *Lys.* 10.5). They would have known all about the disadvantages of Aigospotamoi, but, as we have seen, had to weigh these against the disadvantages of basing themselves further down the Hellespont. Diodoros, however, says Alkibiades offered to bring an army of Thracians to their aid, supplied by his friends, the kings Medokos and Seuthes, in exchange for a share in the command (13.105.3; cf. Nepos, *Alc.* 8.2–3; Plut., *Alk.* 37.2). This makes much more sense and is typical of Alkibiades' way of waging war. But whatever his advice was, it was brusquely rejected by the Athenian *stratēgoi*, and he was naïve to think that he could again worm his way back into Athenian favour. An army of Thracians was a poor substitute for the support of the king of Persia.

As the days went by, the Athenians became increasingly careless, scattering about in the area of Aigospotamoi as soon as they got back from their daily row

across the straits. The stalemate was broken by Lysander, according to Xenophon (2.1.27–8). On the fifth day, he instructed those following the Athenians back to their moorings to make sure they disembarked as usual, then raise a shield as a signal when they were halfway back if they did, and ordered his fleet to sea the moment he saw the signal. Konon saw the enemy bearing down and raised the alarm, but the Athenians were in total disorder. Some of their ships had only two banks manned, some one, and some were completely empty. Konon's own ship and seven others got to sea together fully manned, and so did the *Paralos*, but Lysander took all the rest close to land, with most of their crews, though some escaped to nearby small forts.

Plutarch (*Alk.* 37.2; *Lys.* 11.1–6) more or less follows Xenophon, but Diodoros, though the rest of his account is reconcilable with Xenophon's, has a completely different version of the way the battle started. According to this (13.106.1–2), the *stratēgos* Philokles, who held the command that day, ordered the other trierarchs to man their ships and follow him, while he set out earlier with thirty that were ready. Lysander, who had heard of this from deserters, put to sea with all his ships, and, having caught Philokles, pursued him back to base. There, most of the remaining triremes had not been manned, and when Lysander saw the confusion he put Eteonikos ashore with his troops, and they rapidly overran part of the Athenian camp. Lysander himself began to grapple the Athenian ships and try to tow them off. The Athenians put up a brief fight both at the ships and in the camp, but then broke and fled, losing all but ten triremes.

It has become fashionable recently to accept Diodoros' version, but it makes little or no sense.¹¹ He does not say what the Athenians were up to, but modern commentators have come up with four scenarios. In the first the Athenians are just following the same routine as on the previous four days, with Philokles heading off for Lampsakos before the rest are ready. In the second they have decided to withdraw to Sestos, with Philokles again setting off ahead of the rest. In the third they are trying to lure Lysander into a trap, with Philokles as the bait. The fourth combines the second and third: the Athenians are feinting to withdraw to Sestos, again using Philokles as bait. But all four scenarios fail to explain one simple thing. Why were Philokles' ships ready but not the others? Even if the Athenians just intended to repeat their challenge to Lysander or to withdraw to Sestos, one would have thought they would have had the sense to get all the ships ready. If they intended to offer Lysander battle, not to have done so was sheer folly. But if the intention was to lure Lysander into a trap, it was essential to have all the ships ready: there is no point in baiting a trap without setting it. If, moreover, Lysander learned what the Athenians' intentions were from deserters, this would presuppose they were known at latest the night before the battle, making it all the more impossible to believe that so few of the Athenian ships were ready next morning.

The only possible explanation for this, other than Xenophon's, would be some kind of treachery. There were accusations against Adeimantos, according to Xenophon (2.1.32), and Lysias confirms this in his first speech against Alkibiades'

son of the same name (14.38). Demosthenes says it was Konon who accused Adeimantos (19.191). Plutarch implies that Alkibiades suspected treachery was the reason for the rejection of his advice by the *stratêgoi*, naming Tydeus and Menandros, in addition to Adeimantos (*Alk.* 36.4 and 37.1; cf. *Lys.* 11.1), and Pausanias (10.9.11) says the Athenians believed Tydeus and Adeimantos had been bribed by Lysander to betray them. But this evidence is not convincing. Adeimantos' survival, when others were executed by Lysander, was enough to cast suspicion upon him, and Konon, who had been away from Athens for over ten years, could well have wanted to divert suspicion from himself when he returned. As for Tydeus and Menandros, they are not implicated in any contemporary source. In any case, one can understand why the Athenians 'did not accept that they deserved the disaster at Aigospotamoi', as Pausanias (*loc. cit.*) says, and the idea that treachery accounted for it might have soothed their pride. But it was an implausible explanation. Apart from anything else, would not those not in the plot, and particularly the *stratêgoi*, have become suspicious when they began to prepare for whatever action they were supposed to be taking and the others sat about doing nothing? And what on earth could Athenian *stratêgoi* have hoped to gain by such treachery? In the event, if Tydeus and Menandros were traitors, it cost them their lives. In contrast to all this nonsense, Xenophon's account provides an entirely plausible explanation for what happened.

At least, however the battle began, our sources are agreed that the Athenians were mostly caught ashore with very few of their ships properly manned. Diodoros may be right in giving the Spartan marines a greater part to play than Xenophon does and in saying Eteonikos was their commander (13.106.4), rather than Xenophon's Thorax (2.1.28). Eteonikos appeared on the victory monument at Delphi (ML 95), but Xenophon had personal reasons for disliking him (cf. *Anab.* 7.1.12, 15 and 20). Thorax, however, was certainly one of Lysander's officers (cf. Plut., *Lys.* 19.4).

Although there are slight discrepancies between the sources as to how many Athenian ships escaped the débâcle – figures vary from none (Frontinus, *Strat.* 2.1.18) to twelve (Lysias 21.11) – Xenophon's figures are as good as any. Xenophon also says that with his nine ships Konon first put in at Abarnis, a headland near Lampsakos, where, presumably to hinder pursuit, he burned the mainsails of Lysander's fleet. They would have been left ashore as usual before a battle, though it is odd that they were not left safely at Lampsakos. Then Konon set off for Cyprus with eight ships – he would live to fight another day – while the *Paralos* made her lonely way to Athens with the terrible news.

Beyond saying that Lysander rounded up 'most' of the Athenian crews (2.1.28), Xenophon gives no number for the prisoners, and neither does Diodoros. Plutarch, however, says there were 3,000 Athenian prisoners (*Lys.* 13.1; cf. *Alk.* 37.3) and Pausanias 4,000 (9.32.9). If either of these figures is anything like the truth, there may have been a large number of allied prisoners as well, but even if there were, it seems clear that, despite what Xenophon says, the majority escaped, unless we are to suppose that many thousands had been killed in

the battle. The crews of the captured ships would have amounted to over 30,000 men.

Lysander had already shown his brutal side at Iasos and Kedreiai, but it is possible that if it had been up to him, he would have released his Athenian prisoners, not for any humanitarian reason, but to swell the numbers crowded into Athens. He was later to release the Athenian garrison at Byzantion for this reason (Xen. 2.2.2). But recent acts of the Athenian assembly and of Philokles in particular had exacerbated feelings against the Athenians. The assembly had voted to cut off prisoners' right hands to stop them ever rowing again, possibly to deter deserters, and Philokles had ordered the crews of a Corinthian and an Andrian trireme thrown overboard (Xen. 2.1.31). Plutarch (*Lys.* 9.5) says Philokles had also proposed the decree about prisoners and that it provided that they should have their right thumb cut off so that they could no longer use a spear, but could still row. This, however, seems less likely. In either case, one is reminded of the alleged French threat to cut off the fingers of British archers during the Hundred Years War.¹²

When the matter was put to the assembled allies, they decided to execute all the Athenians among the prisoners, except Adeimantos, who had objected to the offending decree in the assembly (Xen. 2.1.32). It has been argued that Xenophon does not actually say that all the Athenians were killed, only that Philokles was, and that Diodoros also only mentions Philokles' execution.¹³ But Xenophon clearly implies that all the Athenians were killed, and Diodoros' failure to mention any deaths but Philokles' is not compelling.

Lysander also took steps to inform Sparta of his victory, sending off Theopompos, whom Xenophon describes as a 'Milesian pirate' (2.1.30). If this is the same man as the 'Theopompos, son of Lapompos' who appears on the Delphic victory monument, he is referred to there as a 'Melian' (ML 95f), and in Pausanias' description of the monument as a 'Myndian' (10.9.10).¹⁴ Pirate or no, he was presumably chosen because he commanded a particularly fast ship, and it allegedly covered the approximately 390 nautical miles (722 kilometres) in under three days.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the *Paralos* brought the news to Athens, and Xenophon's description of its reception is justly famous: 'a sound of wailing travelled along the long walls to the city, as one passed the news to another, and so that night no one slept' (2.2.3). But there was no thought of immediate surrender. An assembly was held and it was resolved to block all the harbours save one, repair the walls, post guards and prepare for a siege. Later, steps were taken to unite the whole population by restoring rights to those who had lost them, probably mostly after the fall of the Four Hundred (Xen. 2.2.11; Andokides 1.77–9), though exiles were not recalled, despite Aristophanes' advice (*Frogs*, lines 686–705).

But there was no immediate attack on the city. Instead, Lysander went first to Byzantion and Chalkedon, where he was readily admitted. The Byzantines who had betrayed the city to Alkibiades made their escape and eventually reached Athens, where they received the citizenship, and all the Athenians who were

caught, including the Athenian garrisons, were released on condition they went to Athens, the idea being that the more people who crowded into the city, the sooner it would run out of food (Xen. 2.2.1–2). Isagoras, in a speech written for a client probably in 402, claims that at some point Lysander also threatened anyone importing grain into Athens with death (18.61). After dealing with Byzantion or Chalkedon, he returned to Lampsakos to repair his ships, and then made for Lesbos, with now no fewer than 200 (Xen. 2.2.5). Diodoros (13.106.8), who says nothing of Byzantion and Chalkedon, has him go straight from Lampsakos to Sestos, and send the Athenians who had escaped there from the battle to Athens. This is plausible enough, but there is no reason to doubt he went to Byzantion and Chalkedon first.

On Lesbos he took steps to ensure that all the cities, particularly Mytilene, were under pro-Spartan regimes, and he sent Eteonikos off to the Thraceward region with ten ships to do the same there (Xen. 2.2.5). Elsewhere, presumably as soon as news of the battle reached them, city after city broke with the Athenians until only Samos remained loyal (Xen. 2.2.6). In gratitude, the Athenians passed a decree offering Athenian citizenship to any Samian who settled in Athens, while the Samians who remained retained their autonomy, and were allowed to use the ships there, presumably the twenty the Athenians had left (cf. DS 13.104.2). An inscription recording the decree survives (ML 94=Fornara 166).

Lysander had sent messages to Agis at Dekeleia and to Sparta, announcing his arrival with 200 ships, and the Spartans mobilized the full force of the Peloponnesian League, under the other king, Pausanias, to rendezvous with him and Agis in Attica (Xen. 2.2.7). This was the first time both kings had taken the field at the same time since the late sixth century,¹⁶ and the intention was obviously to frighten the Athenians into immediate surrender. But Lysander actually arrived with only 150 ships (Xen. 2.2.8), and he probably went first to Samos, as Diodoros says (13.106.8). If he had already sent Eteonikos off with 10, and now left 40 at Samos to reduce the island, he would have had only 150 left, but Diodoros rather spoils this neat solution by saying that he had 200 when he reached the Peiraieus (13.107.2).

If the Spartans were hoping for an immediate surrender, they were disappointed, and, ironically, the difficulty in supplying such huge forces probably compelled them to send most of them home after a short while. The longest their army had ever spent in Attica, in the early years of the war, even at two-thirds strength, had been about forty days (Thuc. 2.57.2), and though Lysander's fleet might have been able to intercept merchant ships carrying food to the beleaguered city, it would have required enormous quantities itself.¹⁷ Diodoros, who tells us of the army's dispersal (13.107.3), implies that it was decided to withdraw all the land forces and just maintain the blockade by sea, but Agis was evidently still in Attica some time later, when the Athenians first asked for terms (Xen. 2.2.11), and it would not have made sense to abandon Dekeleia before they surrendered.

Xenophon says it was when their food ran out that the Athenians first asked for terms (2.2.11), but this is clearly an exaggeration since they managed to

hold out for several more months. Possibly it was rather the withdrawal of the main Peloponnesian army, and possibly of the fleet to Samos, which gave them momentary hope. They sent first to Agis at Dekeleia, offering to become allies of the Spartans, while retaining their walls. They probably knew that he would reply that he was not competent to negotiate and advise them to send to Sparta – he had more or less said the same to the Four Hundred's representatives in 411 (Thuc. 8.71.3) – but they may have hoped to win his support. If so, however, they would have been better advised to approach Pausanias before he left. As it was, Agis brusquely told them that he had no authority to negotiate, and the envoys were then sent to Sparta to offer the same terms.

This time the ephors met them at Sellasia, about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles (12 kilometres) north of Sparta, and told them to go and come back only when they had something better to offer (Xen. 2.2.12–13). The Spartans also appear to have made their own proposals, for Xenophon says (2.2.15) Archestratos recommended to the council of Five Hundred that the Spartan terms be accepted, and that they had proposed that 10 *stadia* (just over a mile or 1.8 kilometres) of each of the 'long walls' be dismantled (cf. Lysias 13.8). However, Archestratos was imprisoned, and a decree passed, possibly on Kleophon's motion (cf. Lysias *loc. cit.*), forbidding such proposals.

At this point Theramenes intervened. Speaking in the assembly, according to Xenophon (2.2.16), he offered to go to Lysander and find out whether the intention behind the demand about the walls was the enslavement of the Athenians or was just to ensure their good faith. Xenophon does not say where Lysander was, but it was long suspected that he had gone to complete the reduction of Samos, and the publication of a papyrus fragment now in Michigan (Michigan papyrus no. 5982) confirms this.¹⁸ Lysias (12.68), in a speech delivered by himself, probably in 403, claims that Theramenes declared he had discovered something important, and undertook to arrange a peace which would not involve giving hostages, demolishing the walls or surrendering warships. He was unwilling to disclose what it was he had discovered, but asked them to trust him. In a later speech (*c.* 399), written for someone else, Lysias confirms this and adds that Theramenes asked for full powers to negotiate (13.9; cf. 14). Improbable as some of this may seem, it receives some confirmation from the Michigan papyrus, which has Theramenes explain his refusal to reveal his secret as a way of not committing Athens to any concessions in advance.

According to Xenophon (2.2.16–17), Theramenes stayed with Lysander for three months, probably until March 404, 'waiting until the Athenians would agree to any terms because all the food had run out', and then returned, claiming that Lysander, after detaining him all that time, had finally told him to go to Sparta, since it was the ephors alone who had the authority to negotiate. He was then chosen as one of ten ambassadors to go to Sparta with full powers (Xen. 2.2.18).

Suspicion inevitably arises about Theramenes' real motives – not for nothing was he nicknamed '*kothornos*', a boot which could be worn on either foot (Xen. 2.3.31). It has been objected that the Athenians ought to have known by now

that Lysander had no more authority than Agis to offer terms, and that it should not have taken Theramenes three months to learn this. And why, when he returned, apparently without an answer to the questions he said he was going to ask, was he immediately entrusted with another embassy?¹⁹ But Xenophon does not say Theramenes offered to go to Lysander to discuss terms, only that he would find out why the Spartans were insisting on dismantling the 'long walls'. This was a question to which Lysander could be expected to have an answer, even though it might have been better to ask the Spartan authorities. It is only if one tries to combine Xenophon with Lysias that difficulties arise. It is the latter who introduces the notion that Theramenes was given full powers to discuss terms, and the mysterious secret he claimed to have discovered.²⁰ But Lysias was clearly out to damn Theramenes in both the speeches in question, and also seems to have confused his first mission to Lysander on Samos with his second to Sparta itself (13.11). As for the Michigan papyrus, it is by no means certain that that is any more reliable, and it faces the same objections as Lysias.²¹

This leaves the question why Theramenes spent so long with Lysander. Xenophon's explanation that he was waiting until the Athenians would agree to any terms because all the food had run out has been widely accepted.²² It has been objected that if what Theramenes wanted was to get the Athenians to surrender, the quickest way was to return immediately with an answer to the questions he had been sent to ask: no, the Spartans did not intend to enslave them, but, yes, they did insist on the demolition of sections of the 'long walls' as a guarantee of good faith. However, both Theramenes and Lysander may well have felt that the longer the former's return could be delayed, the more likely the Athenians were to accept their fate. An immediate return, while there was still some hope of holding out, might simply provoke a defiant response.

It is possible that Theramenes really wanted to sound out Lysander on the future form of government the Athenians would be allowed, but this is outside the scope of this book.²³ More pertinent is the question why, having apparently failed in his mission to Lysander, he was then entrusted with the one to Sparta. But this begs the question whether he had failed in his mission to Lysander. If he had really gone to find out the reason for the Spartan insistence on the demolition of the 'long walls', and had returned with the encouraging information that it was not a threat to the personal freedom of the Athenians, he could well have been thought to have succeeded. There is, thus, no reason to doubt Xenophon's version of events.

When Theramenes and his fellow-ambassadors were again confronted at Sellasia with the question why they had come, they were now able to reply that they had come with full powers to negotiate peace, and were allowed to proceed. Presumably the Spartans had known in advance that they were on their way, for they had evidently also summoned representatives of their allies to Sparta (Xen. 2.2.19). It was probably at a meeting of the Spartan assembly, reminiscent of the one which had preceded the outbreak of war (Thuc. 1.67–87), that peace was now discussed.

The meeting opened, as on the previous occasion (cf. Thuc. 1.67–71), with speeches from representatives of Sparta's allies, this time principally those from Corinth and Thebes, urging that no peace be made and that Athens be destroyed (Xen. *loc. cit.*). Plutarch (*Lys.* 15.2) says Erianthos of Thebes proposed that the city be razed to the ground and the country be left for sheep to graze.²⁴ Presumably after Sparta's allies had spoken, the Athenian envoys were allowed some sort of reply (cf. Thuc. 1.72–8), but none is recorded. Then, if the same procedure was followed as in 432, the foreigners would have been asked to leave, and the Spartans would have debated among themselves (cf. Thuc. 1.79–87).

It may have been now that King Agis proposed, with Lysander's support, that Athens should be destroyed, as Pausanias claims (3.8.6); in other words that the proposal made by the Corinthians and Thebans be accepted. But what Pausanias says is not very convincing and should probably be seen as a garbled reference to the previous proposal.²⁵ More convincing, perhaps, is an anecdote in Polyainos' *Strategemata* (1.45.5), in which Lysander is said to have argued that the destruction of Athens was not in Spartan interests since it would lead to the Thebans' becoming stronger, whereas through an Athens held by tyrants they could keep an eye on the Thebans. But Lysander could not have anticipated the rule of the so-called 'Thirty Tyrants' in Athens, and although what he allegedly said may well have been what many Spartans thought, and may even have said in private, it is unlikely that he would have risked offending the Spartans' most powerful allies by saying something like this in public.

According to Xenophon (2.2.20), it was the Spartans themselves who, to their eternal credit, refused to 'enslave a city that had done great good in the greatest dangers that Greece had ever faced', and instead offered reasonable terms. Again this is reminiscent of the debate in 432, when the question of the Athenian role in the defeat of Persia had arisen. The Corinthians, famously, had played down the Athenian contribution, claiming that the Persians themselves had been responsible for their own defeat (Thuc. 1.69.5), but the Athenians had naturally made much of it (Thuc. 1.73.2–75.1). It seems likely that they also said something along these lines in 404.

One would like to believe Plutarch's story (*Lys.* 15.3) of the Phokian who, at a banquet for the leaders of Sparta and her allies, sang the first chorus of Euripides' *Elektra*, and so moved his audience that they felt it would be wicked to destroy so famous a city and one which produced such men. But similar stories were told of the release of Athenian prisoners in Sicily, who knew Euripides' poetry, and even of the granting of asylum in Syracuse's harbour to sailors pursued by pirates who could recite it (Plut., *Nik.* 29.2–3).

It is not absolutely clear what terms the Spartans offered, and it is possible that the differing versions in the sources represent various stages between the terms offered and those finally agreed. The earliest stage may be represented by Plutarch's version in his life of Lysander, which purports to be an actual Spartan decree couched in its original Doric (*Lys.* 14.4). In this the Athenians are required to demolish 'the Peiraieus' (i.e., presumably, its walls: cf. Lysias 13.4) and the 'long

walls', to leave 'all the cities', though keeping their own land, and to restore exiles, but the number of ships they are to be allowed is to be decided at Athens. This differs from Xenophon's version (2.2.20), which says nothing of leaving the cities or keeping their own land, but lays down twelve as the number of ships allowed. The requirement to withdraw from all the cities – presumably those in the empire – also appears in Diodoros' summary (13.107.4).

Andokides, in a speech probably delivered in 392, claims that the inscription recording the peace made a specific reference to Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros, which were to revert to the possession of their inhabitants (3.12). This has sometimes been dismissed,²⁶ but it possibly represents a clarification of the general requirement to 'leave all the cities'. The three islands were largely populated by Athenian settlers, and the Athenians might well have originally assumed that they were not covered by the general clause.

More interestingly, the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* implies that one of the terms required the Athenians to be governed by the 'ancestral constitution' (*patrios politeia*: 34.3), and this is supported by a later passage in Diodoros (14.3.2; cf. 6), though he does not include any such provision in his earlier summary. Possibly there was some general statement in the peace that the Athenians should be 'autonomous according to ancestral traditions' (*autonomoi kata ta patria*: cf. Thuc. 5.77.7).²⁷

Whatever the original terms, we can well believe Xenophon when he says Theramenes and his colleagues were surrounded by a great crowd when they returned to Athens, afraid that they had been unsuccessful, because so many people were now dying of hunger (Xen. 2.2.21). Next day, Theramenes addressed the assembly and said they must obey the Spartans and dismantle the walls (Xen. 2.2.22). Even now, there was some opposition, but in the end the assembly accepted the terms. Almost exactly two centuries later, after the battle of Zama in 202, there was similar opposition at Carthage to the terms offered by Rome, and it took Hannibal himself to remove one speaker from the rostrum.²⁸

Xenophon does not name any of the opponents of peace, and it would be natural to think one was Kleophon. However, according to Lysias (13.12; cf. 30.10–14 and Xen. 1.7.35), he had already been removed from the scene, having been brought to trial before a packed jury for not sleeping in barracks, and executed. Lysias also claims that some of the *stratēgoi* and taxiarchs went to Theramenes to protest about the terms, but that the proponents of peace had all such people arrested on trumped-up charges before the assembly met to discuss the terms (13.13–20, 47–8 and 18.5). However, if the assembly really met on the day after Theramenes' return, and we can well believe the Athenians wanted to deal with the matter as soon as possible, it is difficult to believe that there was time to rig charges against and arrest such important people.²⁹

But, however they did it, Theramenes and his supporters carried the day, and so the great war came to an end, probably in early April 404, twenty-seven years and a few days after it had begun, according to Thucydides (5.26.1–3).³⁰ It was

a little later, on the 16th day of the Athenian month Mounychion (c. 25 or 26 April: cf. Plut., *Lys.* 15.1), that the most famous scene took place, when 'Lysander sailed into the Peiraeus, the exiles returned and they began to raze the walls to the music of the pipe-girls, with great enthusiasm, thinking that that day would be the beginning of freedom for Greece' (Xen. 2.2.23).

It was perhaps now, too, that Lysander sent a typically 'laconic' despatch home, saying simply 'Athens is taken' (*halôkanti tai Athanai*), whereupon the ephors replied that the word 'taken' (*halôkanti*) was enough. Even Plutarch, who tells the story (*Lys.* 14.4), regarded it as '*ben trovato*', but one would like to believe it was true. Thus, in one word, the war could finally be said to have ended.³¹

CONCLUSIONS

Militarily speaking, the Spartans deserved to win the war. Since, when it broke out, they were dominant on land, the Athenians at sea, if either were to win a meaningful victory, it had to be on the others' element. But whereas the Spartans learned how to do it, the Athenians never really did. In general, too, the Spartans prosecuted the war with more purpose and more vigour, despite what Thucydides sometimes alleges.

The important words here are 'meaningful victory'. As we have seen (above, p. 32), it has been argued that Perikles' aim of 'winning through' would have been victory enough, since it was the Spartans who were the aggressors. But a mere stalemate that led to a negotiated peace would have been no guarantee that they would not resume the conflict at some future date. They had previously repeatedly shown a willingness to go to war, if Thucydides is to be believed. If the Athenians were to live in peace, farming their land and enjoying the fruits of their empire, they had to do more than simply 'win through'.

How this might have been done was shown, first, in 425 and 424, when the establishment of bases round the Peloponnese led to a situation in which even the Spartans began to lose their nerve (cf. Thuc. 4.55). The effects of the occupation of Pylos, in particular, were instantaneous and far-reaching, and a more determined effort to exploit it might have led to widespread trouble with the helots, something the Spartans feared above all. A full-scale helot revolt would certainly have provided one of those 'wars at home' which Thucydides says (1.118.2) had earlier precluded prevention of the growth of Athenian power. In the end, however, more slaves probably deserted the Athenians as a result of the occupation of Dekeleia (cf. 7.27.5) than ever deserted the Spartans.

Nor was this the only way the Athenians might have hurt the Spartans. Perikles had warned that the Peloponnesians and their allies could stand up to all the Greeks (Thuc. 1.141.6), but Sparta's own forces, even including the *perioikoi*, were probably not as numerous as those of Athens. Sparta's allies, however, had fielded over 16,000 hoplites at Plataia (Hdt. 9.28.3–6), and these did not include those of two of the most powerful, Elis and Mantinea, each of whom could produce at least 3,000 (cf. Thuc. 5.58.1; DS 12.78.4). With these the Spartans

could probably muster some 40,000 hoplites as against Athens' 29,000 (cf. Thuc. 2.13.6),¹ and this is to say nothing of the Boiotians.

But the Spartan alliance was not indissoluble. The late arrival of the Eleians and Mantineians at Plataia is suspicious, there was trouble with the Arcadians in the 470s (cf. Hdt. 9.35.2), and from 460 to 446 the Megarians defected to the Athenians. During the war, we know from an inscription (*IG* i³ 88) that the people of Halieis concluded an alliance with the Athenians, probably as a result of their raiding from Methana, and there may also have been some kind of agreement with Trozen (Thuc. 4.118.4). These were comparatively minor places, but they show that systematic pressure could produce cracks in the Spartan alliance, and the Athenians could have done more to exploit this.

They could, for example, have pushed home the attack on Epidaurus in 430, instead of giving up after coming 'within a hope of capturing it' (Thuc. 2.56.4). They might have hung on to Prasiai, which they took and then abandoned in the same year (2.56.6). They might even have seized a base in Lakonia itself, as they did in 413 (7.26.2), and should certainly not have waited until 424 to seize Kythera (4.53–4). As well as invading the Megarid twice each year, they could immediately have seized Minoa off Nisaia, as they did in 427 (3.51), and even gone on to capture Nisaia itself, as they did in 424 (4.69.4). Why wait, too, until 425 to demonstrate to the Corinthians the reach of Athenian sea power, or until 424 to demonstrate the same to the Sikyonians (cf. 4.42ff. and 4.101.3–4)? Landings had, after all, twice been made in the territory of the latter in the 450s, the second time under Perikles' own command (1.108.5 and 111.2).

The closest the Athenians ever came to defeating the Spartans in a real sense was perhaps in 418, and the key to that situation was the alliance with the Argives. It is true that earlier in the war a treaty between the Argives and Spartans was still in force (cf. 5.14.4), but treaties can be broken, and the Athenians might at least have tried to secure the support of the Argives. They had been rivals of the Spartans for over two centuries, had a democratic regime and had been allies as recently as the 450s (cf. 1.102.4). The Athenians might, for example, have undertaken to restore Kynouria, which the Argives had lost in the mid-sixth century and were still claiming in 422/1 (5.14.4).

None of this was beyond Athenian capabilities in the early years of the war, when their human resources were undamaged by plague and their financial resources at their highest level. As it was, for a people who had some thirty years before proudly recorded the death of their citizens in war 'in Cyprus, in Egypt, in Phoenicia, at Halieis, on Aigina, in the Megarid, in the same year' (*ML* 33=Fornara 78), the efforts made in the opening years of this war were pathetic. Effectively, the initiative was surrendered to the enemy.

Even when, after the Peace of Nikias, the Spartans faced real trouble with their allies, the Athenians were slow to exploit it. Alkibiades seems to have grasped what an opportunity it was, and the alliance he engineered with Argos, Elis and Mantinea probably brought the Athenians closer to victory than at any other time. He could rightly claim to have 'put together the greatest powers

in the Peloponnese' (6.16.60), for, apart from Sparta herself, Corinth and possibly Sikyon, that is precisely what Argos, Elis and Mantinea were.² It was also true that he had 'brought the Spartans to fight for their all on one day at Mantinea', and, as was said above (p. 110), one has only to think of what happened after Leuktra to imagine what might have been the consequences of a Spartan defeat at Mantinea. But only 1,000 Athenian hoplites were there that day, and Alkibiades was not even in command, though this may have been his own fault.

Then came the supreme folly of the Sicilian expedition, and though one can admire the resilience the Athenians displayed in its aftermath, in the last eight years of the war they were always essentially on the defensive. The only times their navy went anywhere near the Peloponnese, for example, was when Anytos set off to the relief of Pylos in 409 (DS 13.64.6), and Alkibiades went to Gytheion in 407 (Xen., *Hell.* 1.4.11). It is somehow typical that the former never even arrived at his destination, and that the latter was simply spying on Spartan naval activity. Where were the raids of the war's early years? Why was no attempt made to draw the Spartans away from Dekeleia by exploiting the continued presence of Messenian troops at Pylos?

Even the great victories at Kyzikos and Arginousai were not followed up with any vigour. Thrasylos' campaign in Ionia came a year after Kyzikos, and the attacks on Chalkedon and Byzantion two years after it. Arginousai was followed by the inanities of the generals' 'trial' at a time when the sailors of the Spartan fleet were reduced to working as hired labourers on Chios. It is true the Athenians had financial problems, but these cannot excuse the lackadaisical way they seem to have waged war in these years. Though the Spartans almost certainly sued for peace after Kyzikos, and possibly after Arginousai, one does not have the impression that they were really on the point of collapse.

It is easy to be led into thinking that the Spartans, too, had no real idea how to fight a war like this. But though the invasions of Attica may seem futile, they surely achieved far more than Athenian raiding, not only in actual damage, but more importantly in damage to Athenian morale. Thucydides remarks on the reluctance of his fellow-citizens to take Perikles' advice and seek refuge in the city area (2.14.2 and 2.16), and although the plague could not have been foreseen, the overcrowding evidently made it worse (cf. 2.52.1 and 54.5). When assessing the initial Spartan strategy, we should not forget that within two years it had brought the Athenians to seek peace (2.59.2).

But if Thucydides is right, the Spartans and their allies realized from the start that traditional methods would probably not be enough to defeat enemies like the Athenians. Before the war broke out, King Archidamos was already talking of inciting rebellion in the Athenian empire, and drawing attention to what that would require: a navy, the financial resources to pay for it and new allies, Greek or barbarian, to supply them (1.80–2). These points were reiterated by the Corinthians (1.121), and additional ships and funds immediately required of states sympathetic to the Peloponnesian cause in Italy and Sicily (2.7.2).

It is true that early efforts to implement this wider strategy seem at best half-hearted. No attempt was made to help Poteidaia once war had broken out, though the city held out into its second year, and the attempt to aid Mytilene was a farce. Similarly, although the capture of Spartan ambassadors to Persia, at about the same time as the fall of Poteidaia, shows that the Spartans had heeded Archidamos' advice to seek 'barbarian' allies, the Persian king's later complaint that Spartan envoys tended to contradict one another (4.50.2) hardly suggests they were very serious. But at least the strategy that was to win the war in the end was evidently in the minds of the Spartans and their allies from the start.

Elsewhere, too, it was almost invariably the Spartans who took the initiative. From the first year of the war, they and their allies were active in the northwest, and by various means, from 427 onwards, effectively knocked Kerkyra out of the war. In 426 came the founding of Herakleia Trachinia. Thucydides says (3.92.4) one of the reasons was that it lay on the route to Thrace, and, if so, the Spartans were already thinking of alternative ways of getting at the allies of the Athenians there, the strategy that was to be so brilliantly implemented by Brasidas. Perhaps, too, they were already thinking of reaching the Hellespont by land, and so cutting the Athenian lifeline to the Black Sea.

But it is the way in which they seized the initiative in 412 that is so impressive. If the Athenians had not met with disaster in Sicily, the opportunity might never have arisen, but the Spartans could still have failed to grasp it when it did. As it was, they not only grasped it, but seem to have realized precisely how best to use it. Already, at the conference at Corinth in the spring, the crucial decision was taken to send forces to the Hellespont (8.8.2), after first raising the allies of the Athenians in revolt, and from then on until the end of the war, despite all vicissitudes, the Spartans never lost sight of this objective.

It may be thought that the only reason why they won in the end was because they had Persian backing, but even this opportunity had to be seized when it came, and, although relations almost broke down from time to time, this was largely the fault of the Persians. If anything, the Spartans played their hand brilliantly, exerting pressure where necessary, as when Lichas denounced the first treaties or Kallikratidas walked out on Cyrus, but never pressing too hard. It is also by no means certain that the Spartans would not have won but for Persian help. They could certainly raise a large enough fleet without it. As far as we know, no ships were ever contributed by the Persians, and it was only after Kyzikos that new ones were built in Persian territory. Nevertheless, up to and including Kynossema, the Spartans consistently had more ships than the Athenians, though not by many,³ and if Diodoros is to be believed (cf. 13.50.2), Mindaros still had almost as many at Kyzikos. Although the provenance of some of these ships is uncertain, the majority certainly came from the Spartans and their allies in mainland Greece, Sicily, Italy and Ionia.

After Kyzikos, some ships were certainly built at Antandros with Pharnabazos' help (Xen., *Hell.* 1.1.24–5), and Xenophon talks of more being built there in 408 and 405 (*Hell.* 1.3.17 and 2.1.10). But Diodoros implies Lysander's original

seventy in 407 came from Rhodes, Ephesos, Miletos and Chios (13.70.2), and Xenophon says the fifty additional ships Kallikratidas had at the beginning of the Arginousai campaign came from Chios and Rhodes (1.6.3). Lysander certainly had some ships built at Antandros in 405, but there is no reason to believe that the majority of his ships in that year came from there. Not all the commanders featured on the victory monument (Pausanias 10.9.9–10; cf. ML 95) will have commanded ships from their home states. The Myndian, for example, is Xenophon's 'Milesian' pirate, Theopompos (*Hell.* 2.1.30), the Samian Kleomedes, presumably an exile, since the Samians were allies of the Athenians, and some of the others from Asia Minor will have commanded ships built with Persian funds. But there is no reason to doubt that ships from most, if not all, the states mentioned, particularly the mainland ones, fought at Aigospotamoi. Many of these last figure in Thucydides' list of those required to provide ships in 412 (8.3.2), and most were, or had been, naval powers, however small (cf., e.g., Hdt. 8.1 and 43–6).

It is also not the case that the Spartan fleet was wholly maintained at Persia's expense. Tissaphernes, in particular, was for various reasons clearly reluctant to honour his commitments. He delayed his first pay-out for almost a year (cf. Thuc. 8.9), and was thereafter so miserly that the Spartans eventually took their custom to Pharnabazos (8.99.1). At one time they are even said to have thought they could use the resources of their own allies to finance their fleet (8.44.1), and they certainly did secure funds from sources other than the Persians, from time to time, for example by plundering states still committed to the Athenians, such as Klazomenai, Kos and Lampsakos (8.31.4, 41.2 and 62.2), and by wooing friendlier states such as Rhodes and Chios (8.44.4 and 101.1). After his quarrel with Cyrus, Kallikratidas secured funds from both Miletos and Chios, and also sent to Sparta (Xen., *Hell.* 1.6.8–12).

But it is true that in general the Spartans seem to have had fewer difficulties in financing their fleet than did the Athenians, and this was almost certainly due to Persian financial support. This meant, first, that, although the necessity to plunder hindered Athenian naval operations from time to time, for example after Kynossema and at the time of Notion, the Spartans do not seem to have been hampered in this way. It is also possible that Persian financial aid enabled them to outbid the Athenians for oarsmen, and even to induce some in Athenian service to desert. This was the hope of the Spartan envoys who joined Lysander on his first visit to Cyrus, and it was the point of his request for the additional obol in his sailors' pay (Xen., *Hell.* 1.5.4 and 6–7). But it is by no means certain that it had the desired effect. Plutarch's claim (*Lys.* 4.4) that after Notion the majority of the sailors in the Athenian fleet deserted is obviously an exaggeration, and the only contemporary evidence is Xenophon's statement that Konon reduced the number of ships he manned from one hundred to seventy (*Hell.* 1.5.20). But he later says that Konon 'picked the best rowers from many crews' (1.6.16), and this at least implies he could have manned more than seventy.

Thus the Spartans and their allies devised the strategy that won the war, and it was probably not necessarily a case of requiring the Persians to 'give them the tools to finish the job'.⁴ Persian financial aid was a bonus, but it is by no means certain that the Spartans would not have won if they had not received it.

That the Spartans received help from the Persians in return for accepting Persian claims over the Greek cities of Asia Minor also raises a moral question, but we should not be too quick to condemn them. Churchill, after all, said that if Hitler invaded hell, he would at least be prepared to make a favourable reference to the devil,⁵ and Athenians, albeit Athenian oligarchs, were just as happy to surrender Asiatic Greeks to the Persians (cf. Thuc. 8.56.4). Nor was the Spartan betrayal as complete as it may appear. Apart from Lichas' outburst in the winter of 412/11 (8.43.3–4), the Spartans were probably aware that it was one thing for them to sign away the Greek cities to the Persians, quite another for the Persians to re-establish control over them. Probably few had Persian garrisons or governors, and some that did were able to get rid of them, for example Antandros (8.108.4–5). That they had to pay tribute to the Persian king is more likely. To secure this was the purpose of both Tissaphernes and Pharnabazos in approaching the Spartans in the first place (8.5.5 and 6.1), and although the first two agreements talk only of preventing the Athenians and the Spartans themselves from exacting tribute (8.18.1 and 37.2), the implication of all three is that any tribute is henceforth to be paid to the Persian king; that it was is indicated by the way Cyrus assigned 'all the tribute from the cities' to Lysander in 405 (Xen., *Hell.* 2.1.14; cf. DS 13.104.4).

But one wonders how much this would have been resented. It has been suggested that the Spartans negotiated a fourth treaty in 408/7 which guaranteed the autonomy of the Greek cities in return for payment of tribute,⁶ but even if this is not true, these cities had been paying tribute to either the king of Persia or the Athenians for over a century, and may well have come to regard it as a fact of life. Presumably it was paid by the wealthier classes, and they may have considered it a small price to pay for guarantee of their position, particularly if they had had to accept some more democratic kind of regime as allies of the Athenians. Ordinary people probably did not care much either way – what they would have wanted was peace and security. In the absence of Persian governors and garrisons, Greeks would have regarded themselves as 'autonomous', if not wholly 'free'.

It is natural for those of us who live in democracies to regard the Athenian defeat as a tragedy, and, in the light of some Spartan behaviour after the war, Xenophon's description of how people rejoiced at the demolition of the 'long walls' because they thought 'that day the beginning of freedom for Greece' (*Hell.* 2.2.23) may seem bitterly ironic. But we should not forget that the Spartans acquiesced in the restoration of Athenian democracy just over a year after the Athenian surrender, and may have ordered the removal of the regimes Lysander set up in the Aegean at about the same time (cf. Xen., *Hell.* 3.4.2).⁷

Above all, the Spartans refused to accede to the demands of their allies for the

CONCLUSIONS

destruction of Athens, and it is questionable whether the Athenians would have behaved as well had the situation been reversed, in view of their treatment of the peoples of Mytilene, Torone, Skione and Melos. Nor should we forget that the Athenians had hitherto controlled and exploited their so-called 'allies' far more than the Spartans. One cannot help but wonder whether the Greek world would really have been a better place if the Athenians had won.

APPENDIX

The sources

There are translations of many of these sources in the Penguin Classics series, and of most of the others in the Loeb Classical Library, published by Harvard University Press in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and by William Heinemann Ltd of London. Where editions differ in division into chapter and verse (e.g. in Plutarch's lives) I use the Loeb edition. For additional information see the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edition, Oxford, 1994).

Aelian, *VH*: Claudius Aelianus, AD 165/70–230/5, *Varia Historia* ('Miscellany of History').

Aelius Aristides, AD 117–180s: Greek sophist and man of letters.

Aineias Taktikos (Aeneas Tacticus): fourth-century Greek writer on tactics.

Aischines, *c.* 397–*c.* 322: Athenian orator.

Andokides, *c.* 440–*c.* 390 : Athenian orator.

Androtion, *c.* 419–340: Athenian historian, surviving only in fragments.

Antiochos: fifth-century Syracusan historian, surviving only in fragments.

AP (*Athēnaiōn politeia* – 'Constitution of the Athenians'): treatise on the Athenian constitution, written in the 330s, with some revision in the 320s, attributed to Aristotle (q.v.), but probably by one of his students.

Aristophanes, 450s?–*c.* 386: Athenian comic playwright.

Aristotle (Aristoteles), 384–322: Greek philosopher and scientist.

Asklepiodotos: first-century writer on tactics.

Demosthenes, 384–322: Athenian orator and statesman.

Diodoros (Diodorus): first-century Sicilian historian, hence often referred to as 'Diodorus Siculus'.

Duris, *c.* 340–*c.* 260: historian and tyrant of Samos, surviving only in fragments.

Ephoros, *c.* 405–330: Greek historian. His work survives only in fragments, but was one of Diodoros' main sources.

Euripides, *c.* 485–*c.* 405: Athenian tragic playwright.

Hellānikos, *c.* 480–395: Greek historian, surviving only in fragments.

Hellenika Oxyrhynchia: papyrus fragments of an unknown fourth-century historian, found at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt. A convenient modern edition is that of P. R. McKechnie and S. J. Kern (Warminster, 1988).

- Herodotos, 480s?–420s?: Greek historian.
- Hesychios, fifth century AD(?): Greek lexicographer.
- Himerios, AD *c.* 310–*c.* 390: Greek rhetorician.
- Isokrates, 436–338: Athenian orator and pamphleteer.
- Justin (Marcus Iunian(in)us Iustinus), second, third or fourth century AD: author of a Latin epitome of the lost work of Pompeius Trogus (q.v.).
- Ktesias: court physician to Artaxerxes II of Persia (405/4–359/8), author of a history of Persia (*Persika*), surviving in fragments and the epitome of Photius (AD *c.* 810–*c.* 893).
- Lysias, *c.* 459/8–*c.* 380: Athenian orator and speech-writer of ‘metic’ status.
- ‘Old Oligarch’: modern name given to the author of an essay on the Athenian constitution, attributed to Xenophon, but by an earlier, unknown Athenian.
- Pausanias: second-century AD Greek author of a guidebook to Greece.
- Philistos, *c.* 430–356: Greek author of a history of Sicily, surviving only in fragments, but used by Diodoros.
- Philochoros, *c.* 340–260: Greek historian, surviving only in fragments.
- Phylarchos: third-century Greek historian, surviving only in fragments.
- Plato, *c.* 429–347: Greek philosopher.
- Plutarch (L.? Mestrius Plutarchus), AD 40s–120s: biographer and essayist.
- Polyainos: second-century AD Greek author of a collection of ‘stratagems’. Edition and translation by Peter Krentz and Everett L. Wheeler (Chicago, 1994).
- Polybios, *c.* 200–*c.* 118: Greek historian.
- Pompeius Trogus: Roman historian, probably of the time of Augustus, whose work on Greek history is preserved in the epitome of Justin (q.v.).
- Stephanos of Byzantion: sixth-century AD Greek grammarian.
- Strabo, *c.* 24 BC–AD 20s: Greek geographer.
- Theopompos: fourth-century Greek historian, surviving only in fragments.
- Thucydides, *c.* 460–*c.* 400: Greek historian, the main source for the first twenty-one years of the Peloponnesian War.
- Xenophon, *c.* 430–?350s: Greek historian and essayist.

NOTES

Works referred to more than once are cited according to the Harvard system – see Bibliography – except for some standard works: for these see Abbreviations, pp. xv–xvi. Full references are given in the notes for works cited only once.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1 All dates are BC unless otherwise stated. For the date of the attack on Plataia see now Hornblower, 1991, 237–8. References to Thucydides are given by book, chapter and verse only, unless confusion might result, in which case the abbreviation ‘Thuc.’ is used; for other abbreviations see pp. xv–xvi. For accessible recent studies of Thucydides see Hornblower, 1987, and Cawkwell, 1997. For a stimulating literary study see Rood, 1998.
- 2 As, e.g., Arnold Toynbee tried to do, *Hannibal’s legacy* (Oxford, 1965), p. 1.
- 3 For Thucydides and other sources see Appendix, pp. 258–9.
- 4 The Greek word usually translated ‘Spartans’ is ‘*Lakedaimonioi*’ from Lakedaimon, the ancient name for the valley in which Sparta lay. ‘*Spartiatatai*’, the proper term for ‘Spartans’, was only rarely used by ancient writers, and usually to distinguish Spartans of full-citizen status from the various kinds of second-class citizens, who, with them, made up the Lakedaimonians. However, for most purposes, ‘Lakedaimonians’ means ‘Spartans’ and ‘The Lakedaimonians’ was the official term for the Spartan state, just as ‘The Athenians’ was for the Athenian. The translation ‘Spartans of the officer class’ for ‘*Spartiatatai*’ in the Penguin translations of Thucydides and Xenophon’s *Hellenika* is misleading, and should never have been countenanced. On the Spartan alliance see, in particular, Ste Croix, 1972, pp. 101ff.
- 5 For the inscription see Hornblower, 1991, 413; W. T. Loomis, *The Spartan war fund. IG V. 1.1 and a new fragment* (Historia Einzelschriften 74; Wiesbaden, 1992); Rhodes, 1994, 201.
- 6 See Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 598 on 4.118.3, and Kallet-Marx, 1993, 89–90 and 177–8.
- 7 See Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 293 on 6.31.3, and in general, on the financing of the Athenian fleet, V. Gabrielsen, *Financing the Athenian fleet* (Baltimore and London, 1994). For slave oarsmen see now Hunt, 1998, ch. 5.
- 8 See Hornblower, 1991, 198–9; Kallet-Marx, 1993, 89–90 and 177–8.
- 9 On the constitution of Corinth see Salmon, 1984, pp. 231ff.; on Aristotle’s view of *probouloi* see *Politics* 1298b29, 1299b31 and 1323a7.
- 10 On the ‘Old Oligarch’s’ prescription for achieving *eunomia* see 1.9.
- 11 On *neodamôdeis* see Gomme, *HCT* iv, pp. 35–6; P. Oliva, *Sparta and her social problems* (Amsterdam and Prague, 1971), pp. 166–70.
- 12 See n. 4 above.

- 13 Lazenby, 1985, 15–16.
- 14 See Graham Shipley in J. M. Sanders (ed.), *ΦΙΛΟΛΑΚΟΝ: Lakonian studies in honour of Hector Catling* (London, 1992), pp. 211ff.
- 15 Lazenby, 1993, 227–8. Hunt's suggestion ('Helots at the battle of Plataea', *Historia* 46 (1997), pp. 129–44, and 1998, 32–9) that the helots formed the rear ranks of the Spartan phalanx is very unlikely in view of everything we know about the hoplite ethos and, particularly, Spartan attitudes.
- 16 Though it is usually asserted that two ephors always accompanied a king on campaign on the basis of these passages, ephors are mentioned only in Herodotos' account of Plataia (9.76.3), and Xenophon's of King Pausanias' campaign in Attica in 403, to which *Hellenika* 2.4.36 refers. It is, however, possible that in the latter case the ephors were there to reinforce the king's authority – he is earlier said to have persuaded three of them to sanction the campaign (*Hell.* 2.4.29); similarly, the ephors at Plataia may have been there to back up the regent, Pausanias.
- 17 The view of Rahe, 1980, that ephors were selected by lot seems to rest on a misunderstanding of Aristotle, *Politics* 1270b27ff. (cf. 1272a28–30 and 1272b36). In these passages, '*hoi tuchontes*' does not mean 'the lucky ones' but 'any old people'. Elsewhere Aristotle plainly states that in Sparta all offices were elective (*hairetai*) and none selected by lot (*klêrôtê*: *Politics* 1294b32–3).
- 18 On the basis of Plutarch, *Lyk.* 6.1–2, it is often said that the Spartan assembly was called the '*apella*'. But, although there is some evidence for this term – e.g. Hesychios s. v. '*apellai*'; *IG* v¹ 1144, 1146; Michell, *Recueil d'inscriptions grecques* (Brussels, 1900), 995A4 – most of it is late and irrelevant. Thucydides and Xenophon use the term '*ekklêsia*' for the Spartan assembly, and that this is what it was called in the fifth century is proved by Thucydides 5.77.1, where he quotes one of its enactments in the original Doric, beginning, 'thus it seemed good to the *ekklêsia* of the Lakedaimonians' – cf. Gomme, *HCT* iv, pp. 134–5 on the passage, and see Ste Croix, 1972, Appendix xxiii, 346–7.
- 19 The only way to get round this statement would seem to be either to argue that Thucydides means that it was known that the majority wanted war, or that all those who spoke were either members of the *gerousia* or ephors. But this is not the natural interpretation of the passage.
- 20 On this expression see *HCT* loc. cit. n. 18 above.
- 21 On the navarchs see Sealey, 1976.
- 22 For these officers and the Spartan army in general see Lazenby, 1985.
- 23 For what this probably means see Lazenby, 1985, 45.
- 24 On this see Lazenby, 1985, 13–20.
- 25 In the argument referred to in n. 24 above, I was inclined to believe that 'inferiors' would not have gone through the *agoge*, but now I am not so sure.
- 26 It is often said that hoplites (*hoplitai*) were so-called from their shield, which could be called '*hoplon*'. But the usual word for a hoplite shield was '*aspis*', and '*hoplon*' in the singular is very rare. The plural, '*hopla*', meaning 'arms', is common, and it seems likely that 'hoplites' just means 'men-at-arms': see J. F. Lazenby and David Whitehead, 'The myth of the hoplite's *hoplon*', *CQ* 46 (1996), pp. 27ff.
- 27 The Greek is '*doratia te enapekeklasto ballomenôn*', and it is usually assumed that the noun to be understood with '*ballomenôn*' ('when they were hit') is 'the Spartans'. But there is no grammatical reason why it cannot be 'the *piloi*'. What Thucydides means is that the arrows penetrated the *piloi*, meaning corslets, and that the javelins broke off in them. Even he would hardly jump from helmets to bodies without making it clear. Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 475, is in any case wrong to refer to 'steel' caps: if they were of metal, they would be of bronze. In Lazenby, 1985, 32, I accepted that '*piloi*' meant 'caps'.
- 28 Lazenby, loc. cit.

- 29 For these and other specialists aboard triremes see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 110–14. On *taxiarchoi* in a naval context, and the Athenian *nauarchoi*, see Jordan, 1975, 119–34.
- 30 On the trireme and its capabilities see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 231–75.
- 31 Kallet-Marx, 1993, 96ff. On the *archê* as a money-making concern see 7–9, 198–202, etc., and Kallet, 2001, 5, 196, 199–200, 216–17, etc.
- 32 On this controversial passage see Hornblower, 1991, 255–7, and references there.

2 CAUSES

- 1 As Gomme says, *HCT* i, p. 152, but cf. Hornblower, 1991, 64. For contrasting studies of the origins of the war see Kagan, 1969; Ste Croix, 1972; and Badian, 1993. See also Hornblower, 1991, especially 64–6, and 2002, 103–10. On Thucydides' explanation of the causes of the war see Rood, 1998, 205–48, and Pelling, 2000, 82–111. On the futility of trying to see which side he blamed note Rood's remark (1998, 223): 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus read book i as inspired by malice against Athens; Badian read it as inspired by malice against Sparta'.
- 2 On events in the 430s see Rood, 1998, 219–22, and Hornblower, 2002, 104–7.
- 3 For the commercial rivalry hypothesis see, e.g., F. M. Cornford *Thucydides mythistoricus* (London, 1907), and R. L. Beaumont, 'Greek influence in the Adriatic sea before the fourth century BC', *JHS* 56 (1936), pp. 159–204.
- 4 On the Megarian decree(s) see Kagan, 1969, 254–8; Ste Croix, 1972, 225–89; Hornblower, 1991, 110–12, and 2002, 108–9; Pelling, 2000, 103–11.
- 5 Hornblower, *The Greek world, 479–323 BC* (second edition, London and New York, 1991), p. 91: he makes out a good case against Ste Croix's interpretation of the decree, and cf. 2002, 108–9.
- 6 Gomme, *HCT* i, pp. 175–6; Hornblower, 1991, 86; Kagan, 1969, 256.
- 7 For a full discussion of Thucydides 1.42.2 see C. J. Tuplin, 'Thucydides 1.42.2 and the Megarian Decree', *CQ* 29 (1979), pp. 301ff.
- 8 Cf. Legon, 1981, 218; Hornblower, 1991, 197.
- 9 See now D. M. Lewis, *CAH* v, ch. 5.
- 10 The words 'at the isthmus' (*pros isthmôn*) are often emended to 'at Ithome' (*pros Ithômêi*) because Ithome was the Messenians' stronghold. But the siege was hardly a 'battle' and did not end in a Spartan 'victory': see J. F. Lazenby and R. Hope Simpson, 'Greco-Roman times: literary tradition and topographical commentary', in McDonald and Rapp (eds), 1972, p. 88 and n. 56 on p. 97.
- 11 On Kerkyra's role in the war see Wilson, 1987; on why Corinth may have felt so bitter see Salmon, 1984, 281–305.
- 12 It is not certain whether this is the cape now called 'Asprocavo', or the sandy spit now called 'Leukimmi': see Gomme, *HCT* i, p. 183, and Wilson, 1987, 39–40.
- 13 The futility of speculating whether these speeches represent what was actually said or what Thucydides thought ought to have been said is illustrated by the differing views of, e.g., N. G. L. Hammond in P. Stadter (ed.), *The speeches of Thucydides* (Chapel Hill, 1973), p. 41, and C. Macleod, *Collected essays* (Oxford, 1973), p. 55. See also Kagan, 1969, 228 and n. 114, and Pelling, 2000, 112–22.
- 14 For the date see Gomme, *HCT* i, pp. 196–9; for the battle, Wilson, 1987, 42–51, and Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 62–9.
- 15 Wilson, 1987, 44–5.
- 16 For the differences between Thucydides' version of the names and number of the commanders of this squadron (1.51.4) and that of the inscription see *HCT* i, pp. 180–90; ML p. 168; Hornblower, 1991, 95–6. On Thucydides' narrative here see Hornblower, 1991, 94, and Rood, 1998, n. 73 on 223.
- 17 See Kagan, 1969, 273–85; Salmon, 1984, 292–6; Hornblower, 1991, 97–9. Ste

- Croix, 1972, Appendix xiv, 329, rightly rejects the 'extraordinary suggestion' of D. W. Knight, *Some Studies in Athenian politics in the fifth century BC* (*Historia Einzelschriften* 13, Wiesbaden, 1970), pp. 10–11, that the increase in Poteidaia's tribute was designed to provoke her to revolt. Uncertainty about the date of the foundation of Brea and its location (cf. ML 49=Fornara 100) make it difficult to tie it in with Athenian policy in Thrace: see Kagan, 1969, Appendix J, 389–90.
- 18 For the meaning of 'chêlê' here see Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 303, and Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 484, as against Gomme, *HCT* i, p. 219.
 - 19 On this ambiguous phrase see Hornblower, 1991, 109–10; Badian, 1993, 137–42; Rood, 1998, 214–18. It would be odd if Thucydides, having referred to the Thirty Years' Peace in the previous sentence, should now, using the same word 'spondai', refer to a completely different treaty.
 - 20 On this interpretation of 1.67.3 see Kagan, 1969, n. 2 on 286–7; Hornblower, 1991, 110.
 - 21 See M. Heath, 'Thucydides 1.23.5–6', *LCM* 11 (1986), p. 105, as against Ste Croix, 1972, 59.
 - 22 E.g. Meyer, 1899, 315–16; Hornblower, 1991, 116; Rood, 1998, n. 27 on 213. For a contrary view see D. Kagan, 'Corinthian diplomacy after the peace of Nicias', *AJP* 81 (1960), pp. 291–310, but he is wrong to say (1969, 292) that 'Corinth never joined the new coalition that she had helped to create' (i.e. the Argive alliance): see Thucydides 5.31.6 and 32.3. See also Ste Croix, 1972, 60.
 - 23 See A. J. Podlecki, *Plutarch: life of Pericles* (Bristol, 1987), pp. 68–72, and Endnote E, pp. 105–8; Pelling, 2000, 151–7. Diodoros' version of the causes of the war (12.38–39.3), based on Ephoros (cf. 12.41.1), is also anti-Perikles.
 - 24 Cf. A. J. P. Taylor's thesis about the Great War in *War by timetable* (London, 1970).

3 STALEMATE

- 1 Thucydides almost certainly did not mean that Sparta's western friends were to provide 500 ships, as, e.g., Brunt once appears to have believed (1965, 261), though he later corrected this (*Studies in Greek history and thought*, 1993, 91): see Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 10. Diodoros (12.41.1) says Sparta persuaded her Sicilian allies to send 200 triremes. On Sparta's strategy see Brunt, 1965: it is he who translates 'periesesthai' as 'to win through'; see also Hornblower, 1991, 127.
- 2 On this speech see Rhodes, 1988, 190–3, and Hornblower, 1991, 249–50.
- 3 See, e.g., Ste Croix, 1972, 208; Brunt, 1965, 259; Hornblower, 1991, 127. Kagan, 1974, 24–5, is rightly critical of Perikles. Diodoros' claim (12.42.7 and 45.3) that the Athenian raids of 431 and 430 caused the Peloponnesians to withdraw from Attica is very dubious.
- 4 Kagan's suggestion (1974, 43–4).
- 5 Herodotos (7.233.2) gives the number as 400 and says their commander was Eurymachos, whereas Thucydides says their commanders were Pythangelos and Diemporos (2.2.1), and that Eurymachos was the Theban through whom the quisling Plataians arranged the attack, though he agrees that he was executed with the other prisoners (2.5.7). On the differences between Thucydides' account and the fourth-century one in Apollodoros' speech *Against Neaira* ([Demosthenes] 59) see Pelling, 2000, 61–72.
- 6 See Hornblower, 1991, 128 and notes on 304.
- 7 J. Ober, *Fortress Attica: defense of the Athenian land frontier, 404–322 BC* (Leiden, 1985), map on 105, 154ff. and 224, locates this place at the modern Myoupolis.
- 8 As does G. Herman, *Ritualised friendship and the Greek city* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 143ff.
- 9 See F. Winter, *Greek fortifications* (London, 1971), n. 44 on p. 86.

- 10 On the invention of the catapult see Marsden, 1969, 48–64.
- 11 Thucydides appears to say that he ravaged Eleusis itself, but see Hornblower, 1991, 272. On ravaging see V. D. Hanson, *Warfare and agriculture in classical Greece* (revised edition, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1998).
- 12 See I. G. Spence, 'Perikles and the defence of Attica during the Peloponnesian War', *JHS* 110 (1990), pp. 91–109, and 1993, 99 and 131.
- 13 On the 3,000 hoplites of Acharnai see Rhodes, 1988, 276, and Hornblower, 1991, 273–4.
- 14 See the references in Hornblower's note to 2.20.1 (1991, 273). Kagan, 1974, 50, accepts that Archidamos' motives for attacking Oinoe were 'less strategic than political', despite the strategic location of Oinoe noted by Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 297, but he rightly dismisses Busolt's argument that Archidamos' reason for not moving nearer to Athens was fear of Athenian and Thessalian cavalry (*GG*, iii. 2, 930). It is Kagan who suggests Thucydides may have been being ironical (1974, 51–2).
- 15 On Thucydides' statement here that Perikles 'did not hold any assembly or meeting of them', see Kagan, 1974, 54–6; Rhodes, 1988, 206–7; Hornblower, 1991, 275–6. One of Perikles' critics may have been Kleon: see Plut., *Per.* 33, quoting the contemporary comic poet Hermippos.
- 16 This is the reading of the MSS and is probably correct – see Lewis, 1952, 113 and 158. The alternative '*Graikên*' in Stephanos of Byzantion may be due to Stephanos' interest in the 'Graia' mentioned in the Homeric 'Catalogue of the Ships' (*Iliad* 2.498): see Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 1970, 22 and n. 12 on 35. There is now a ferry from Skala Oropou (ancient Oropos) to Nea Psara, the harbour of ancient Eretria in Euboea.
- 17 Hornblower, 1991, 280, says the plan was 'idiotic', because the ships would rot away and could be better used. But they could have been regularly serviced and their oarsmen kept in training.
- 18 Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 80, says Thucydides would not have mentioned the 1,000 hoplites and 400 archers if they had just been the usual marines, but it seems too much of a coincidence that the numbers are exactly what one would have expected 100 triremes to carry.
- 19 Stephanos of Byzantion, *s.v.* '*Aktê*', says Thucydides mentioned a Peloponnesian '*Aktê*', and since there is no such mention in our text, there may be a lacuna here, unless Stephanos says 'Thucydides' by mistake for 'Diodoros' – cf. Diodoros 12.43.2. For the spelling 'Trozen' see Lazenby, 1993, n. 4 on 102.
- 20 The MSS here say 'there being no men [*anthrôpoi*] there', which should mean that the place was uninhabited, but this is belied by 2.25.2. So either '*anthrôpoi*' here means 'troops', which would be most unusual, or something has gone wrong with the text. But clearly there was no garrison until Brasidas arrived.
- 21 Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 83, says '*phroura*' was the Spartan term for 'a small mobile force' and cites Xen., *Hell.* 3.2.23, 3.5.6, etc. But there the phrase '*phrouran phainein*' means something like 'proclaim mobilization'. Rhodes, 1988, 211, accepts Gomme's explanation, but translates '*phroura*' as 'expeditionary force' on p. 71.
- 22 Cawkwell, 1975, 68–70; Holladay, 1978, 401ff.
- 23 As suggested by H. D. Westlake, 'Seaborne raids in Periclean strategy', *CQ* 39 (1945), pp. 75–84.
- 24 Rhodes, 1988, 210–11.
- 25 Hornblower, 1991, 282, seems to think this was the Alope on the north shore of the Gulf of Malis (possibly located at the modern Raches: Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 1970, 126–8). But Thucydides is clearly referring to the Alope in Lokris – cf. Strabo 1.3.20 and 9.4.3. Diodoros (12.59.2) says Atalante became an island only in 426.
- 26 See, e.g., A. J. Holladay and J. F. C. Poole, 'Thucydides and the plague of Athens', *CQ* 29 (1979), pp. 282ff., and their subsequent articles in *CQ* 32 (1982) and 34

- (1984); see also J. Longrigg, 'The great plague of Athens', *History of Science* 18 (1990), pp. 209–25. It has even been suggested that Thucydides' description of the plague is largely rhetorical (A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in classical historiography* (London, 1988), pp. 28ff.), though this is far-fetched. Diodoros (12.58.2) estimates the number of civilians, free and slave, who died as 'more than 10,000', but, if anything, this seems too low.
- 27 For a possible reconstruction see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 156 and 227–30.
- 28 See, e.g., H. Delbrück, *Die Strategie des Perikles* (Berlin, 1890), pp. 121ff.; Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 395; F. W. Adcock, *CAH*¹ v, p. 200.
- 29 As Kagan, 1974, 74–5, does.
- 30 On ravaging see the references in n. 11 above.
- 31 See Fornara, 1971, 55. For speculation about the peace proposals see Kagan, 1974, pp. 81–5.
- 32 On these ships see Rhodes, 1988, 249; Hornblower, 1991, 354–5.
- 33 Kagan, 1974, 98–9, following Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, n. 1 on 962, and G. Gilbert, *Beiträge zur innern geschichte Athens im zeitalter des peloponnesischen Kriegeres* (Leipzig, 1977), pp. 122–3, argues that the generals were prosecuted and acquitted, but they remained in command (2.79.1), and Thucydides may mean only that the Athenians were critical of their decision.
- 34 Kagan, 1974, 102–3.
- 35 According to the MSS of Thucydides 2.75.3, the work took seventy days and nights, but this seems too long: cf. Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 207–8.
- 36 See now Kern, 1999, 103–9.
- 37 Westlake, 1977, 354, suggests this hints that Thucydides was unhappy with this explanation because it might indicate divine intervention, but this is not necessary.
- 38 Cf. Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 964 and 984.
- 39 Zahrnt, 1971, 236ff. and Map V on 136.
- 40 See Beloch, *GG*, p. 310; Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 213–14; Rhodes, 1988, 254; Hornblower, 1991, 236.
- 41 I see no good reason to suppose, with Kagan, 1974, 108, that Phormio deliberately let Knemos pass him.
- 42 See Hammond, 1936/7, 132 and fig. 1 on 129.
- 43 R. L. Beaumont, 'Corinth, Ambracia, Apollonia', *JHS* 72 (1952), p. 64, suggests that Perdikkas was trying to show the Peloponnesians that they could reach Macedonia and Thrace without having to march through Thessaly, which was pro-Athenian at this time, but such a route would be long and difficult – see Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 215. R. Hoffmann, 'Perdikkas and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War', *GRBS* 16 (1975), p. 374, doubts Perdikkas' involvement, but there is no good reason to disbelieve Thucydides here.
- 44 Cf., e.g., Kagan, 1974, 109; Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 72; Rhodes, 1988, 256; Hornblower, 1991, 364–5. For a contrary view see Lazenby, 1993, 139–40: the number '44' I gave there for the Peloponnesians was a mistake.
- 45 Thucydides uses here the verb '*kataduein*', which means 'to sink', but triremes would not literally 'sink' until they became waterlogged, though, if holed, they would settle in the water and so be rendered helpless. In this book I therefore place inverted commas round parts of the verb 'to sink'.
- 46 Cf. Gomme, *HCT* i, p. 165.
- 47 On the Spartan practice of attaching 'advisers' to commanders in the field (cf. 3.69.1, 5.63.4 and 8.39.2) see Westlake, 1989, 248 and n. 33; S. J. Hodkinson, 'Social order and the conflict of values in classical Sparta', *Chiron* 13 (1983), p. 268; Cartledge, 1987, 212. One might compare the Soviet 'dual command' system whereby political commissars had to approve orders.

- 48 Similarly, Napoleon tended to think that naval disasters were the fault of his admirals – see, e.g., David Chandler, *The campaigns of Napoleon* (London, 1986), pp. 324–5.
- 49 For various explanations see Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 221, and Kagan, 1974, 111–13. But why did the Athenians not send one squadron to Crete and one to Phormio?
- 50 Hornblower, 1991, 366–7, following Lewis, 1952, 85f., is inclined to accept the reading ‘57’ with one MS, but the others have ‘77’, and as Gomme argues (*HCT* ii, p. 222) Phormio and his men, who had just defeated 47, would hardly have been alarmed – cf. 2.88.1 – by just 10 more.
- 51 Phormio’s speech is dismissed by Hornblower, 1991, 368, as ‘a notably implausible set of responsions’. But intelligent commanders can guess their opponents’ arguments: cf., e.g., *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Montgomery* (London, 1958), pp. 160–1. As for Rhodes’ argument (1988, 258) that Athenian crews would not have needed a lesson in tactics, stressing the familiar can be comforting – see Montgomery again, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–7. On speeches before battle see M. H. Hansen, ‘The battle exhortation in ancient historiography: fact or fiction’, *Historia* 42 (1993), pp. 161–80; Pritchett, 1994, ch. 2. On the *diekplous* and the *anastrophe* see Lazenby, 1987, and Whitehead, 1987. Despite A. J. Holladay, *Greece & Rome* 35 (1988), pp. 149ff., I am still not convinced that it was possible to shear away an opponent’s oars without breaking one’s own.
- 52 This is the crucial passage that proves that on a trireme each oar was pulled by a single man – see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 20 and 111.
- 53 See W. E. McLeod, ‘Boudoron, an Athenian fort on Salamis’, *Hesperia* 29 (1960), pp. 316ff. and pl. 72.
- 54 See Westlake, 1977, 352, for Thucydides’ use of ‘*legetai*’ at 2.93.4. For a successful raid on the Peiraieus in the fourth century see Xen., *Hell.* 5.1.21ff.
- 55 Triremes became waterlogged and hence slower, unless they were regularly dried out – see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 151–2, 276–9. But Thucydides says the Peloponnesians had ‘launched’ the ships for this raid (cf. ‘*kathelkusanter*’: 2.93.4), implying they had previously been ashore, and his statement that they had been ‘launched for some time’ (*dia chronou kathelkustheisai*: 2.94.3) can hardly refer just to the time they had been afloat during the raid. Warner, in the Penguin translation, p. 186, translates ‘had not been launched for a long time’, and although this is a mistranslation, one wonders whether a ‘not’ has been misplaced. If the ships had been ashore for a long time, they might have become too dry.

4 INTERLUDE

- 1 On this see Spence, 1993, 129–33.
- 2 On the possible implications of this see Hornblower, 1991, 382–3.
- 3 Thucydides says these loyalists included the Athenian *proxenoi* at Mytilene itself (3.2.3). On the anecdote about one of them in Aristotle, *Politics* 1304a4ff. see Hornblower, 1991, 383–4.
- 4 Most famously, perhaps, the way in which news of the naval preparations of Konon and Pharnabazos reached Sparta in 396: Xen., *Hell.* 3.4.1.
- 5 Thucydides says that the fleet was anchored ‘at Malea north of the city’ (3.4.5), and that it was originally north of the city is confirmed by the statement that the Athenians later ‘changed their anchorage to south of the city’ (3.6.2). However, the best-known Malea on Lesbos was the cape south of the city. The most plausible explanation is that ‘Malea’ referred to the whole peninsula ending in the cape – see Wilson, 1981, 152–5. This may be why Thucydides adds ‘to the north/south of the city’ in the two passages. But see also Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 257–8; Hornblower, 1991, 386; Rhodes, 1994, 179.
- 6 Spartans are usually either ‘*Lakedaimonioi*’ or ‘*Spartiatai*’. Cawkwell, 1975, 56 and n.

- 10, makes too much of this man's arrival before the Mytilenean envoys' plea at Olympia. All it shows is that the Spartans were already at least ready to send agents to Mytilene; sending forces was another matter. The Theban's presence is explained by the Lesbians' claim to be descended from Boiotians (cf. 3.2.3).
- 7 The neck of land now connecting the hill on which the Genoese castle stands to the mainland is still called 'Komidhiá', meaning a seaweed-choked channel: Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 257.
- 8 Cf. Rhodes, 1994, 181. For the Mytilenean appeal (3.9–14) see Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 261–70; Hornblower, 1991, 391–8; Rhodes, 1994, 182–8.
- 9 For these slipways (*holkoí*) see Salmon, 1984, 136–40.
- 10 On Thucydides' reference to the 'thirty ships' in 3.16.2 see Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 272; Hornblower, 1991, 400; Rhodes, 1994, 190. On the problems connected with Thucydides 3.17, which need not concern us, see Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 272–7; Hornblower, 1991, 400–2; Rhodes, 1994, 190–2; Kallet-Marx, 1993, 130–4.
- 11 On the meaning of 'epikouroi' in Thucydides 3.18.1 see Hornblower, 1991, 403.
- 12 This is a good illustration of the point made by the 'Old Oligarch' (1.19–20) that the Athenians were accustomed to life at sea. In 428, the hoplites were not expecting to fight a naval engagement, which would have required greater expertise. For possible social implications of the passage see Hornblower, 1991, 400, on 3.16.1, and 403; see also Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 116, 136 and 253.
- 13 Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 277. For a contrary view see Kagan, 1974, 143.
- 14 My figures are based on the assumption that triremes acting as transports could carry only forty hoplites – see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 226–7.
- 15 On the capital levy (*eisphora*) and the 'money-collecting' (*argurologoí*) ships see Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 278–9; Hornblower, 1991, 403–4; Rhodes, 1994, 193–4; Kagan, 1974, 144–5 and Appendix A, 363–4; Kallet-Marx, 1993, 134–8.
- 16 Baring one foot is thought to have been a way of placating the gods of the underworld: see P. Vidal-Nacquet, *The black hunter* (Baltimore, 1986), p. 64, and L. Edmunds, 'Thucydides on monosandalism (3.22.2)', *GRBS* monograph 10 (1984). I am not entirely convinced that Thucydides' explanation is wrong.
- 17 On the shrine of Androkrates and the routes across Kithairon see Hornblower, 1991, 408.
- 18 This episode was used by Ste Croix to show that Athenian rule was popular with ordinary people in allied cities (1954/5, 4). But as D. W. Bradeen ('The popularity of the Athenian empire', *Historia* 9 (1960), pp. 263–4) pointed out, it does not show that the ordinary people of Mytilene had been anything but supportive of the revolt until food began to run short.
- 19 For the location of Anaia see G. Shipley, *A history of Samos 800–188 BC* (Oxford, 1987), p. 266, fig. 22.
- 20 An inscription from Sparta (ML 67=Fornara 132) records a contribution of 1,000 darics to the Spartans, and Alkidas' visit to Ephesos has been thought to be an appropriate occasion. For the inscription's date see the references in n. 5 to Chapter 1 above. For criticism of Alkidas see Kagan, 1974, 148–51 – it is he who suggests support from Persia might have been forthcoming – and Kallet-Marx, 1993, 139–40; for a defence see Roisman, 1987.
- 21 For the speeches see Hornblower, 1991, 420–38, and Rhodes, 1994, 204, and references in both, and Pelling, 2000, 72–81.
- 22 J. K. Davies, *Athenian propertied families 600–300 BC* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 145–320. For a contrary view see F. Bourriot, 'La famille et le milieu social de Cléon', *Historia* 31 (1982), pp. 404–35, but cf. J. S. Trail, *Demos and trittys* (Toronto, 1986), p. 41.
- 23 J. E. Atkinson, *CQ* 42 (1992), pp. 57–8.
- 24 D. M. Lewis, *CAH* v, pp. 405–6.
- 25 The number has been doubted, but see Wilson, 1981, 146–8.

- 26 Hornblower, 1991, 440–1, argues that the cleruchs formed a garrison on Lesbos, but Rhodes, 1994, 214, is dubious. See also Kagan, 1974, 164 and n. 62.
- 27 See Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 334–6 and map facing p. 336; Hornblower, 1991, 442; Rhodes, 1994, 215, referring to Legon, 1981, pp. 27ff. and map 3.
- 28 See Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 333–4, and Hornblower, 1991, 442. For my interpretation see Rhodes' translation, 1994, 97.
- 29 See Marsden, 1969, 50.
- 30 On these speeches see Hornblower, 1991, 444–63; Rhodes, 1994, 216–27.
- 31 See Hornblower, 1991, 466–91, and 1996, 204–5; Rhodes, 1994, 228–40; and references in both. See also Wilson, 1987, 87–114.
- 32 Wilson, 1987, 94, suggests these two ships, last heard of off Klaros in the Aegean, had been sent to Kerkyra on some kind of mission.
- 33 On this sea fight see Wilson, 1987, 101–3; Roisman, 1987, 407ff. Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 78–9, are surely wrong to say the Athenians formed in line-ahead.
- 34 Roisman, 1987, 409–11.
- 35 Westlake, 1969, 105ff.; Holladay, 1978, pp. 408ff.
- 36 Kagan, 1974, 182–6, probably goes as far as it is possible to go, but many of his views are very speculative.
- 37 Hornblower, 1991, 493, accepts the argument of J. D. Smart, 'Athens and Egesta', *JHS* 92 (1972), pp. 144–6, that Thucydides just means the general fellow-feeling between Athens and Leontinoi arising from their common 'Ionian' stock. But this renders Thucydides' remark that the embassy was sent 'because they were Ionians' superfluous, as Hornblower acknowledges, and necessitates a forced meaning for 'ancient alliance'. Thucydides probably refers to the alliance as 'ancient' because the treaty of ML 64=Fornara 125 was a renewal.
- 38 Kagan, 1974, 183, but his analysis is over-elaborate. Rhodes, 1994, 242, argues that 'we do not have to assume hindsight' in 3.86.2, and draws attention to the Athenian habit of responding to such appeals, citing the sending of ships to Crete in 429 as a parallel.
- 39 The source in question is a papyrus fragment of either Antiochos of Syracuse or the slightly later Philistos. For various interpretations see Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 389–90; Kagan, 1974, 189–90; Hornblower, 1991, 495; A. B. Bosworth, *CQ* 42 (1992), pp. 46ff.
- 40 *Pace* Kagan, 1974, 188–91, following H. Wentker, *Sizilien und Athen* (Heidelberg, 1956), pp. 113–17.
- 41 Westlake, 1969, 117 and n. 53.
- 42 For the tsunamis of 3.89.5 see the references in Hornblower, 1991, 497.
- 43 Beloch, *GG*, i. 2, 176–7, ii. 2, 322–3; Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 1079; Adcock, *CAH*¹ v, pp. 226–7; A. B. West, 'Pericles' political heirs', *CP* 19 (1924), p. 204. Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 391, thinks there may have been some 'unofficial kite-flying' in Sparta and Corinth.
- 44 Kagan, 1974, 82–4, connects the passage in Aristophanes with the peace offer of 430.
- 45 Cf. Jordan, 1990, pp. 37–69. For the earthquake see H. W. Catling, *BSA* 85 (1990), p. 34.
- 46 For Herakleia see Hornblower, 1991, 501–8. To his suggestion that the oikists Alkidas and Damogon were chosen because of their names, one might add the third, Leon ('Lion'). The Spartans may have been thinking of Leonidas ('Lion's son'), in whose honour a stone lion had been erected at Thermopylai (Hdt. 7.225.2), and as Hornblower himself has suggested to me, the lion was particularly associated with Herakles, after whom the colony was named, because of the Nemean Lion: he often wears a lion skin in art – see, e.g., R. Osborn, *Archaic and classical Greek art* (Oxford

- and New York, 1998), figs 52, 70, 74 and 90 on pp. 109, 137, 143 and 165. The location of the new colony is unclear: see Gomme, *HCT* iii, pp. 394–8; Hornblower, *loc. cit.* above; Rhodes, 1994, 248–50; G. J. Szemler, W. J. Chert and J. C. Kraft, *Thermopylai: myth and reality in 480 BC* (Chicago, 1996), pp. 33–40, and Appendix I, pp. 101–4. The site the latter advocate for the earlier city was originally discovered by Hope Simpson and myself in 1958: see ‘The kingdom of Peleus and Achilles’, *Antiquity* 33 (1959), pp. 103–4 and pl. XVa. Diodoros says (12.59.5) the colonists consisted of 4,000 Peloponnesians and 6,000 from elsewhere.
- 47 See Hornblower, 1991, 509, referring to Salmon, 1984, 316 and n. 23.
 - 48 On Demosthenes’ planned route see Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 402–4.
 - 49 Holladay, 1978, 413, suggests it also looks back to the 450s, when Athens overran Boiotia, Phokis and Opountian Lokris. For the idea that the plans of Nikias and Demosthenes were preconcerted see F. E. Adcock, *CAH*¹ v, pp. 227–8; Henderson, 1927, 141–3 and 149–50; Kagan, 1974, 197–209. For a discussion of Demosthenes’ strategy see Roisman, 1993, 25–7: he is sceptical about the idea that it was preconcerted with Nikias’ operations (24, n. 34), as is Rhodes, 1994, 247 and 252. I am grateful to Professor Roisman for sending me an offprint of his monograph.
 - 50 For this and other places mentioned in Thucydides’ account of Demosthenes’ campaign see Pritchett, *SAGT* vii, pp. 47–82, and the maps, figs 4–5, on pp. 76–7.
 - 51 *Archaeological Reports* 30 (1983–4), p. 35.
 - 52 Commentators have been puzzled by this since hoplites serving as marines were usually drawn from the thetic class: see Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 407–8; Hornblower, 1991, 514. But see Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 56 and Rhodes, 1994, 254–5, for the possibility that these were hoplites. See also C. Rubicam, ‘Casualty figures in the battle descriptions of Thucydides’, *TAPA* 121 (1991), p. 187.
 - 53 Fornara, 1971, 57, but cf. Rhodes, 1994, 255.
 - 54 See P. M. Frazer, review of L. Lerat, *Les Locriens de l’ouest*, in *Gnomon* 26 (1954), p. 250.
 - 55 Thucydides says these hoplites came ‘on the ships’, which should mean the Athenian ships, but he has previously said that they had gone home (3.98.5). For various solutions see Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 411, and Rhodes, 1994, 256–7.
 - 56 This Aiolis may have been under the control of Achaia at this time, as it was early in the fourth century – see S. Bommeljé, ‘Aeolis in Aetolia: Thuc. 3.102.5 and the origins of the Aetolian ethnos’, *Historia* 37 (1988), pp. 297–316; hence Thucydides’ description of Proscheion as ‘in Aitolia’.
 - 57 For the topography of this campaign see Pritchett, *SAGT* viii, pp. 1–78, and Rhodes, 1994, 261. For alternative views see Hammond, 1936/7, 128ff.; *Epims* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 254ff.; 1978, ch. 14.
 - 58 For the possible site of the ambush see Hammond, 1978, 479, but this stands or falls with his other identifications.
 - 59 See Polybios 3.71.2–4 and Lazenby, 1978, 55–6. Roisman, 1993, 28–32, plays down Demosthenes’ contributions to the victories at Olpai and Idomene, but goes too far. In particular, he is wrong to say (29) that the only light troops in Demosthenes’ army at Olpai were those involved in the ambush: Thucydides (3.107.4) says there were Amphiloichian javelineers among the Akarnanians on the left, though admittedly the left was defeated.
 - 60 This point is made by Kagan, 1974, 214.
 - 61 See Hammond, 1936/7, 137–8, and Pritchett, *SAGT* viii, pp. 37–47.
 - 62 Thucydides says this was because the Messenians spoke ‘the Dorian tongue’, and it has been objected that the Messenian dialect would have differed from the Ambraciote, even though the latter also spoke ‘Dorian’ (A. Morpurgo Davies, ‘The Greek notion of dialect’, *Verbum* 10 (1987), pp. 17f.). But this is hypercritical: Messenian and

- Ambrakiot would have been more alike than, say, Athenian and Ambrakiot – see Rhodes, 1994, 265.
- 63 Some regard Thucydides' assertion here that he 'knew' Ambrakia could have been taken as an indication that he was present – see Gomme, *HCT* ii, p. 426; Kagan, 1974, n. 103 on 216; Pritchett, *SAGT* viii, pp. 77–8. Rhodes, 1994, 266, is doubtful.
- 64 See L. H. Jeffery, 'Some Nikai-statues at Olympia in the late fifth century BC', *Miscellanea Manni* (Rome, 1979), p. 1237 and n. 15.

5 ATHENS ASCENDANT

- 1 Probably Pythodoros' 'few ships' of 3.115.5 are to be added to the forty of 3.115.4 and 4.2.2: see Rhodes, 1994, 268.
- 2 On the controversy see Gomme, *HCT* iii, pp. 437–8; Hornblower, 1991, 516 and 531; 1996, 152. Rhodes, 1994, 255, takes the view that he was deposed in 426, but then re-elected in spring 425.
- 3 Reading '*xunepleusai*' in the infinitive in 4.3.2. If we read '*xunepleuse*' in the aorist, Thucydides himself is saying this is why Demosthenes had sailed with them: see Hornblower, 1996, 152–3, and Rhodes, 1998, 209. On Demosthenes' plan and its implementation see Roisman, 1993, 33–6. I particularly commend his remark (n. 59 on 34) that 'it has yet to be demonstrated that the ancients regarded breaches of security with the same alarm as our contemporaries do'.
- 4 Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 439, says there is no timber about at Pylos now and that '*erēmos*' cannot mean 'deserted' because 'the valley of the Pamisos . . . is one of the richest districts in Greece'. But there are, in fact, some trees on Pylos now, and the Pamisos valley is over 30 miles (48 kilometres) away. Hereabouts, Thucydides repeatedly uses '*erēmos*' and '*erēmia*' in their usual sense – cf. 4.8.6, 27.1 and 29.3.
- 5 Cartledge, 1979, pp. 240–1, says Thucydides is wrong about the distance because by the route round the north end of Taÿgetos it is more like 70 miles (113 kilometres). But there was an ancient route across Taÿgetos from Sparta to Kalamata – cf. Homer, *Odyssey* 3.488 – and Thucydides' distance could be right for that: see Pritchett, *SAGT* i, p. 18; Hornblower, 1996, 154; Rhodes, 1998, 209.
- 6 Gomme says here (*HCT* iii, p. 440), 'not all helots by any means, perhaps, after the last revolt, only a small minority, were of Dorian speech'. But this assumes that most of the Messenians had taken part in the last revolt, and had left after it was over (cf. 1.103.1), which is improbable. Thucydides says most of the helots were Messenians (1.101.2), and there is no reason to doubt that Messenians were 'of Dorian speech' (cf. 3.112.4).
- 7 For a defence of Thucydides' text at this point see R. Weil, 'Stratèges, soldats, taxiarques (Thucydide IV, 4, 1)', *Revue de philologie* 62 (1988), pp. 129–33. I take '*peristasin*' here to mean literally 'standing around': the men were just hanging around when the impulse fell on them. On the whole question of whether Thucydides exaggerated the element of luck in the Pylos campaign see now Rood, 1998, 26–31.
- 8 See Wilson, 1979, 54–61, photograph on 144, and map C on 145 (with key to symbols on 142).
- 9 Cf., e.g., Wilson, 1979, 62–4.
- 10 Wilson, 1979, 64, glosses over the problem.
- 11 On all this see Wilson, 1979, 67–72 and 124–6, though he allows too much time for some things. For a message getting from Athens to Sparta in less than thirty-six hours, and a Spartan army marching from Sparta to Athens in less than seventy-two, see Herodotos 6.106.1 and 120, with Lazenby, 1993, 52–3 and n. 14 on 52.
- 12 On the problems of this passage see Wilson, 1979, 73–84; Hornblower, 1996, 158–61; Rhodes, 1998, 212–13. Wilson's solution (1979, 76–82) would have meant leaving the southern entrance to the bay wide open, which is absurd – see Cawkwell's

- review, *CR* 31 (1981), p. 132; nor can I accept R. B. Strassler's solution ('The harbor at Pylos: 425 BC', *JHS* 108 (1988), pp. 198–203) that the 'harbor' in question is the small cove at the southeast corner of Pylos – this also partly vitiates his later article ('The opening of the Pylos campaign', *JHS* 110 (1990), pp. 110–25). For an interestingly different approach to Thucydides' account of Spartan intentions see Rood, 1998, 31–6.
- 13 The entrance is about 1,400 yards (1,280 metres) wide, and a trireme was less than 20 feet (6 metres) wide. For the suggestion that Thucydides actually wrote that the entrance was '8 or 9 stades wide' see R. A. Bauslaugh, 'Thucydides IV. 8.6 and the south channel at Pylos', *JHS* 99 (1979), pp. 1–6, and W. K. Pritchett, *Essays in Greek history* (Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 167ff. Gomme was clearly wrong to think the Spartans intended to sink the ships 'stem facing stem' (*HCT* iii, pp. 443–4), though it is odd that they did not think of mooring them in this way, as the Syracusans did across the entrance to the Grand Harbour, which was of similar width (7.59.3). On the length of Thucydides' stade see Hornblower, 1996, 159–60.
 - 14 A trireme with oars outstretched was about 38 feet (11.5 metres) wide – see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, fig. 80 on 270.
 - 15 The brilliant suggestion of Arnold Toynbee, *Some problems in Greek history* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 376–7. Wilson's discussion of Spartan numbers (1979, 85–6) is muddled. If there were eventually as many *perioikoi* as Spartans, Diodoros' 12,000 men (12.61.2) would not be far wrong.
 - 16 Demosthenes had probably taken the hoplites and archers from the two ships he sent to fetch Eurymedon and Sophokles, as Wilson suggests (1979, 65), but the latter had probably not left him any of their own marines, despite 4.9.2 – see Lazenby, 1985, n. 12 on 195–6, though there I overestimated the number of men Demosthenes placed facing the mainland – I should have said 'more than 600 men'. Wilson, 1979, 50, suggests the Messenians who arrived to help were from the Pylos area, but this is improbable. Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 445, argues that the presence of taxiarchs with the fleet shows that it carried extra troops, but we do not know enough about the Athenian army to be sure of this.
 - 17 Wilson, 1979, 87–8, is convincing on this.
 - 18 See Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 162–3.
 - 19 The only other example I can think of is the British defence against Caesar's first invasion in 55 (*de bello Gallico* 4.24–6), which was on a much larger scale, and where the eagle-bearer of the Tenth Legion succeeded where Brasidas failed.
 - 20 Wilson, 1979, 51, argues that sending to Asine for wood for the 'siege-engines' implies something more than ladders, but they might have required longer poles than were available in the Pylos area. '*Méchanai*' means 'rams' in 2.76.4.
 - 21 Wilson, 1979, 54–7, argues that Thucydides' mention of a 'landing' (*apobasis*) here shows that the Spartans intended to approach from the west by sea, since they could have approached from the east by land. But even if the Osmanaga lagoon was dry in the summer of 425, which is not certain (cf. W. G. Loy and H. E. Wright, 'The physical setting', in McDonald and Rapp (eds), 1972, pp. 44–6), it would have been much easier to transport troops by sea to the southeast corner of the Athenian perimeter than by land. If the only access was by the sand-bar, taking them by sea would have been virtually essential: tramping over sand, even unencumbered by armour and weapons, is exceptionally exhausting.
 - 22 For the number see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 450; Wilson, 1979, 93; Hornblower, 1996, 167; Rhodes, 1998, 216.
 - 23 On these ratios see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 453; Hornblower, 1996, 169.
 - 24 There has been criticism of the Spartans for abandoning any hope of rescuing the men on the island: see, e.g., H. D. Westlake, 'The naval battle at Pylos and its consequences', *CQ* 24 (1974), pp. 218ff. But see J. Wilson and T. Beardsworth,

- 'Bad weather and the blockade at Pylos', *Phoenix* 24 (1970), pp. 116ff., and Wilson, 1979, 91–2.
- 25 See Hornblower, 1996, 170–7, and references there.
- 26 Kagan, 1974, 231–8, but how can an unreported debate be 'an important turning point' (233)? In particular, can we be sure Nikias was in favour of peace?
- 27 See *CAH*² v, p. 387, and Hornblower, 1996, 180.
- 28 See P. T. Stevens' edition of the play (Oxford, 1971), pp. 15–21, and for Thucydides' language, Hornblower, 1996, 180.
- 29 This passage is illuminating for relations between Spartans and helots. Some of the helots evidently owned boats, and the Spartans could not compel them to hazard them.
- 30 On this see Hornblower, 1996, 185–8; Rhodes, 1998, 225–9; see also Kagan, 1974, 239–44.
- 31 See Wilson, 1979, 105, though he perhaps underestimates the number of sailors. On Demosthenes' tactics see Roisman, 1993, 37–9, though again he goes too far in playing down Demosthenes' contribution to the victory (39–41): he could, after all, have just relied on overwhelming numbers.
- 32 On what Thucydides says about the Spartans' 'piloti' see above, pp. 9–10 and n. 27 to Chapter 1.
- 33 The non-Spartiate prisoners are usually thought to have been *perioikoi*, but I still think they were Spartans who had lost their status as citizens, perhaps called 'hypomeiones' ('inferiors': cf. Xen., *Hell.* 3.3.6): see Lazenby, 1985, 14–19. Diodoros' statement that they were 'allies' (12.63.3) is plainly wrong.
- 34 Cf. P. Krentz, 'Casualties in hoplite battles', *GRBS* 26 (1985), pp. 19–20.
- 35 On further possible implications of this joke see Hornblower, 1996, 195–6, and Rhodes, 1998, 234.
- 36 See J. Camp, *The Athenian agora* (London, 1986), pp. 71–2, for a photograph and drawing, or Lazenby, 1985, 117, pls 9a and b.
- 37 On this campaign see R. Stroud, 'Thucydides and the battle of Solygeia', *CSCA* 4 (1971), pp. 227–47, and 'Thucydides and Corinth', *Chiron* 44 (1994), pp. 267–302; J. Wiseman, *The land of the ancient Corinthians* (Göteborg, 1978), pp. 56ff.; Salmon, 1984, pp. 318–20.
- 38 Hanson, 1988, 194, cites this as a precursor of Epameinondas' attack on the Spartan right at Leuktra. But Thucydides implies that the Corinthians simply seized the opportunity to attack the Athenian right because it had only just landed. In the end, too, at Solygeia, both Corinthian wings became involved.
- 39 See P. Vaughn, 'Identification and retrieval of hoplite battle dead', in Hanson (ed.), 1991, 50.
- 40 See M. H. Jameson, C. N. Runnels and T. H. van Andel, *A Greek countryside: the southern Argolid from prehistory to the present day* (Stanford, 1994), p. 78.
- 41 Hornblower, 1996, 209–10.
- 42 See Kallet-Marx, 1993, 2, 156–9, 161–2, 164–70 and 191–4; but cf. Hornblower, 1996, 93–8.

6 SPARTA RESURGENT

- 1 *ATL* ii, p. 82; iii, p. 88; but see Kallet-Marx, 1993, 158–9. For the site of Rhoiteion see Cook, 1973, pp. 77ff.
- 2 Cf. Meiggs, 1982, 357. For the site of Antandros see Cook, 1973, 267–71.
- 3 The number '2,000' for these Milesian hoplites in Thucydides 4.54.1, though accepted by Cawkwell, 1997, 116, is almost certainly wrong (Rhodes, 1998, 245). For Athenian use of allied forces in general see Cawkwell, 1997, Appendix 3, 115–20. On the Kythera campaign see G. L. Huxley and J. N. Coldstream (eds), *Kythera*

- excavations and studies* (London, 1972), pp. 38–9. The excavations, in which I took part, were at Skandeia (now Kastri) itself.
- 4 On the Lakonian Asine see Rhodes, 1998, 246. Kagan, 1974, n. 10 on 263, thinks the Messenian Asine is meant, and suggests the Athenians deliberately raided as widely as possible to increase Spartan alarm. On Helos, Kotyrta and Aphroditia see Rhodes, 1998, 246–7.
 - 5 On Megarian politics at this time see Hornblower, 1996, 231–2.
 - 6 On the border-guards (*peripoloi*) see Hornblower, 1996, 234–5.
 - 7 On the oil-smearing of 4.68.5 see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 531; Hornblower, 1996, 236–7.
 - 8 Possibly Chani, about 7½ miles (12 kilometres) west of Megara: Legon, 1981, 33 and map 1.
 - 9 See Hornblower, 1987, 79.
 - 10 Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 534, referring to Busolt, *GG*, iii, 1139.
 - 11 On Brasidas' later claim that his army was smaller at Nisaia (4.85.7), which Thucydides himself says was not true (4.108.5), see Gomme, *HCT* iii, pp. 553–4; Hornblower, 1996, 280 and 344–5. For the question whether it was Thucydides' judgement that the Athenians had mostly been successful (4.73.4) or the generals' see Hornblower, 1996, 242–3, and Rood, 1998, 67–8. It reminds one of the claim that 'Operation Market Garden' was 90 per cent successful: see Geoffrey Parker, *The devil's birthday* (London, 1984), pp. 232ff. For criticism of the generals' decision see Roisman, 1993, 44–6. Diodoros (12.67.1) wrongly says Brasidas ejected the Athenians from Nisaia.
 - 12 See Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 535; Kagan, 1974, 278; Holladay, 1978, n. 18 on 64. Roisman, 1993, 45–6, is sceptical, though he suggests Demosthenes and Hippokrates may have used the coming attack on Boiotia to deflect Athenian dissatisfaction with their achievements at Megara (46).
 - 13 See Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 537, on 4.76.2. For criticism of the over-elaborate nature of the plan see Roisman, 1993, 46–50.
 - 14 As Hornblower argues (1996, 252), the exiles are to be distinguished from the plotters in Orchomenos; he also draws attention to the two Orchomenian benefactors of Athens recorded on an Attic inscription of 424/3 (*IG* i³ 73).
 - 15 For Panopeus see Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 1970, 42–3 and pls 3a and b.
 - 16 Fossey, 1989, 62–6.
 - 17 Perhaps to the upper plateau of Paliokhani: Pritchett, *SAGT* ii, p. 34 and pl. 17.
 - 18 On this see Hansen, 1993, 168, and Pritchett, 1994, 58; see also Hornblower, 1996, 82–3 and 290–7. For Pagondas see Hornblower, 1996, 289.
 - 19 For the differences in the federal groupings implied by 4.93.4 and *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* 16.3 see Hornblower, 1996, 298–300.
 - 20 Cf. G. L. Huxley, 'Boiotian charioteers in Diodoros', *Philologus* 135 (1991), pp. 320–1. Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 568, is too sceptical about Diodoros here. The Spartan *Hippeis* ('Knights'), who also fought on foot, may similarly have been so-called because they were originally charioteers – see *OCD*³, p. 709, s. v. '*hippeis*', 3. On the depths of phalanxes see Pritchett, *GSAW* i, pp. 134–43. Despite G. L. Cawkwell, 'Epaminondas and Thebes', *CQ* 22 (1972), p. 261, and 1978, 154–5, the depth of the Theban phalanx was not intended to provide a reserve, but to add weight to the 'shoving' (*ôthismos*) see Lazenby, 1991, 98–9. On the Nemea and Leuktra see Lazenby, 1985, 135–43 and 151–62.
 - 21 Pritchett, *SAGT* ii, p. 35, and Kagan, 1974, 284, miss the point.
 - 22 Too much is made of this by, e.g., Henderson, 1927, 235; Kagan, 1974, 284–5; V. D. Hanson, *The western way of war* (New York, 1989), 138. As Pritchett argues (*GSAW* iv, p. 73), it was disadvantageous to receive an enemy attack standing still. In any case, Thucydides 5.70 surely implies that advance at the double was normal – perhaps particularly for Athenians, after Marathon.

- 23 See Cawkwell, 1978, 150–7, and 1989, 375–89.
- 24 See Lazenby, 1991, 96–100; for the ‘crash’ of shields see the references on 96; for the argument about the nature of the *ôthismos* see Hornblower, 1996, 304–6.
- 25 See A. Kirchoff, *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Alphabets* (fourth edition, Gütersloh, 1887), p. 141; C. Clairmont, *Patrios nomos* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 232–4; Pritchett, *GS&W* iv, pp. 132–3.
- 26 Cf. the vase paintings depicting shields with an ‘A’ or ‘ATH’ on them: G. H. Chase, *The shield devices of the Greeks in art and literature* (Chicago, 1979), p. 54, no. CXLVII, cf. CLII.
- 27 Kagan, 1974, 285, assumes the Athenians would have exploited their right’s victory had the Boiotian cavalry not intervened.
- 28 Kagan, *loc. cit.*, says the Boiotian cavalry appeared in the Athenian rear, but it surely ‘appeared beyond’ (cf. ‘*huperphanentôn*’: 4.96.5) the hill, not the Athenian army. L. J. Worley, *Hippeis: the cavalry of ancient Greece* (Boulder, Colorado, 1993), p. 95 (cf. 93, 121 and 171), is similarly mistaken.
- 29 Despite Cawkwell, 1989, 382, and Pritchett, *GS&W* iv, pp. 85–9 and n. 255.
- 30 Despite Hanson, 1988, 194.
- 31 On the convoluted arguments used by both parties in this episode see Hornblower, 1996, 308–16, and Rhodes, 1998, 280–3.
- 32 He also tells a story of a massacre of helots, which he does not date, but surely implies took place shortly before Brasidas’ expedition: see Jordan, 1990, 55. On the truth of the story see R. J. A. Talbert, ‘The role of the helots in the class struggle at Sparta’, *Historia* 38 (1989), pp. 24–5, and M. Whitby, ‘Two shadows: images of Spartans and helots’, in A. Powell and S. J. Hodkinson (eds), *The shadow of Sparta* (London, 1994), pp. 98–9.
- 33 See, e.g., Kallet-Marx, 1993, 171, and, for a contrary view, Hornblower, 1996, 268–9. See also E. Badian, ‘The road to Acanthus’, in R. Mellor and L. Tritle (eds), *Text and tradition: studies in Greek history and historiography in honor of Mortimer Chambers* (Claremont, 1999), pp. 3–35.
- 34 See N. G. L. Hammond, *History of Macedonia* i (Oxford, 1972), p. 103. Hammond identifies the pass into Lynkos as the Kirli Deven pass (*op. cit.*, p. 104, and ii (Oxford, 1979), p. 129).
- 35 On this speech see Hornblower, 1996, 276–8, and references there.
- 36 On Amphipolis’ importance for timber see Meiggs, 1982, 357–8; on the revenue, probably mainly from the mining region of Mount Pangaion, see Kallet-Marx, 1993, 175–6.
- 37 For Brasidas’ route see Zahrnt, 1971, pp. 158ff.
- 38 For Argilos’ tribute record see Hornblower, 1996, 328–9, and references there.
- 39 On Amphipolis see Hornblower, 1996, 320, and references there, with the map on 321.
- 40 For excavations here see the references in Hornblower, 1996, 349.
- 41 See, in particular, Ste Croix, 1954/5.
- 42 On this controversial passage see Hornblower, 1996, 361–2, and references there. On the armistice see Hornblower, 1996, 356–75.
- 43 For criticisms of Brasidas at this time see Bosworth, 1993, n. 39 on p. 37.
- 44 Gomme’s suggestion, *HCT* iii, p. 612, though he does not appear to have been very happy with it.
- 45 See Lazenby, 1985, 47 (cf. 40 and 150). A similar technique seems to have been practised by Thracian mercenaries – see 7.30.2 – and Brasidas may have learned it from them. For the view that it was the men inside the square who were to run out see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 614, referring to Stahl’s note on 4.125.3 (*Thucydides libri octo*, Leipzig, 1882–8), citing 2.83.5. But there the reference is to ships. Better parallels are Xen., *Hell.* 4.5.14 and 16 and 4.6.10.

- 46 Hornblower, 1996, 397. Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 614, says the helots are forgotten in the speech, but they were, after all, Peloponnesians, and Brasidas may deliberately not have singled them out precisely so that they would assume they were included. For the interpretation of 4.126.2 see Gomme, *HCT* iii, pp. 614–15. For the possibility that Thucydides talked to Brasidas see n. 10 above.
- 47 Cf. Lazenby, 1991, 95.
- 48 The MSS of Thucydides 4.129.3 only mention 700 hoplites, but see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 620.
- 49 For discussion of Thucydides' meaning here see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 623; Kagan, 1974, 316 and n. 36; Hornblower, 1996, 409; Rhodes, 1998, 311. It usually seems to be assumed that these 'archontes' are precursors of the later 'harmosts' ('governors'). But 'archontes' can just mean 'commanders', as, e.g., in 4.67.3 and 4.129.3. More particularly, it is the term used of Gylippos at 6.93.2, and he was hardly to be 'governor' of Syracuse.
- 50 See Hornblower, 1996, 421–2; Rhodes, 1998, 313–14.
- 51 The MSS of Thucydides here have 'to the harbour of the Kolophonians' (*es ton Kolophōniōn limena*: 5.2.2), but Leake (*Travels in northern Greece* iii (London, 1835), p. 119 and n. 2) long ago conjectured that the real reading should be 'to the still harbour' (*es ton kôphon limenā*). The area is still called 'Kouphó': see Hornblower, 1996, 425–6.
- 52 See Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 632, but see also Pritchett, *GSAW* iv, pp. 156, 253, 284, and i, n. 35 on p. 91.
- 53 A. G. Woodhead, 'Thucydides' portrait of Kleon', *Mnemosyne* 13 (1960), pp. 304ff., suggests that Thucydides here failed to record other successes of Kleon, but see W. K. Pritchett, 'The Woodheadean interpretation of Kleon's Amphipolitan campaign', *Mnemosyne* 26 (1973), pp. 373ff.; B. M. Mitchell, 'Kleon's Amphipolitan campaign: aims and results', *Historia* 40 (1991), pp. 170ff.; I. G. Spence, 'Thucydides, Woodhead and Kleon', *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995), pp. 411–37.
- 54 For differing views on the identification of this hill see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 636; Pritchett, *SAGT* i, p. 39, and iii, pp. 323–6, with pl. 41b; Jones, 1977, n. 62 on p. 323.
- 55 On Kleon's Amphipolitan campaign in general see Gomme, 1962, pp. 112ff.; Pritchett, *SAGT* i, pp. 30ff., and iii, pp. 298ff; Jones, 1977.
- 56 Gomme, 1962, 116; cf. Rhodes, 1998, 319. For my interpretation of Brasidas' thinking note Thucydides' use of the term 'antitaxis' ('deployment in line opposite') at the beginning of 5.8.2.
- 57 Kleiaridas' part does not become clear until Brasidas' speech in 5.9, on which see Hornblower, 1996, pp. 441ff. The passage in 5.9.8 where Brasidas says, 'troops coming up later are more formidable to the enemy than those already present and engaged' is quoted almost *verbatim* by Aineias the Tactician (3.8.2) – see David Whitehead's translation and commentary (Oxford, 1990), p. 201. Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 645, cites Olpai (3.108.1) as an example, but a better one is the panic among the Athenians at Delion at the sudden appearance of the two squadrons of Boiotian cavalry (cf. 4.96.5).
- 58 Cf. Pritchett, *GSAW* iii, p. 157; Kagan, 1974, 326, says he was making 'the sacrifices that precede battle'.
- 59 D. Lazaridis, *Amphipolis* (Athens, 1994), p. 28; Pritchett, *SAGT* iii, p. 340, and fig. 14 on p. 306. Hornblower, 1996, 445–6, finds it surprising that the feet could be seen without binoculars or telescopes, particularly since anything but a small gap under the gate would have been a security risk. But the Athenians were evidently quite close – see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 647.
- 60 For discussions see the references in n. 58 above, and add Gomme, *HCT* iii, pp. 647–8, and Hornblower, 1996, 446–7.

- 61 See Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 647: the manoeuvre he describes is complex and without parallel; see also, J. K. Anderson, 'Cleon's orders at Amphipolis', *JHS* 85 (1965), pp. 3–4.
- 62 Cf. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon* (ninth edition, Oxford, 1940), s. v. 'ὑπάγειν' B i, referring to Herodotos 4.120.(2) and 4.122.(2), and Thucydides 4.126.6 – Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 647, also refers to the last passage.
- 63 Cf. Pritchett, *SAGT* iii, pp. 334–5, but 'epistrepas' does not have to be intransitive, and to make both 'to dexion' ('the right') and 'ta gumna' ('the shieldless side') the objects of 'dous' ('presenting') is tautological. In the tactical writers 'epistrephein' means to pivot a unit to left or right on its left- or right-hand man – cf., e.g., Asklepiodotos 10.1.4 – and that is plainly not the meaning here; rather the verb is used in the sense Asklepiodotos, e.g., uses the noun 'epistrophai' ('wheelings') in 7.2.
- 64 See now Pritchett, *SAGT* iii, pp. 335–9.
- 65 Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 653, thinks this hill too far away, but one should remember this wing of Kleon's army had not really begun its retreat when Brasidas attacked, and may, indeed, have fallen back to familiar ground.
- 66 As Kagan, 1974, 330, does. Kagan also says, 'the Athenians placed the name of Cleon at the head of those who fought at Amphipolis', citing Pausanias 1.29.13, but all Pausanias says is that 'those who campaigned with Kleon at Amphipolis' were buried in a certain place, and even if he gathered this from a *stele* with Kleon's name first, this proves nothing: it was customary to place the names of *stratēgoi* first (cf. *ML* 33 and 48).

7 PHONEY PEACE

- 1 Cf. A. Andrewes and D. M. Lewis, 'A note on the peace of Nicias', *JHS* 77 (1957), p. 177.
- 2 On the difficulties of interpreting these see Hornblower, 1996, 475–80; Rhodes, 1998, 330–1; and references in both.
- 3 On Thucydides' text here see Hornblower, 1996, 481–2. He argues that the phrase 'and the other cities', which appears to give Athens *carte blanche* with all her allies, should be deleted. But see Rhodes, 1998, 332.
- 4 On Klearidas see Westlake, 1989, 81. Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 690, accuses the Spartans of bad faith, but they might genuinely have thought they could secure the restoration of Amphipolis to the Athenians, and then have found it impossible.
- 5 On this treaty, and in particular the difficulties of Thucydides' text, see Hornblower, 1996, 495–9, and Rhodes, 1998, 336–8.
- 6 Kagan, 1981, 25–32.
- 7 There were several places of this name, the best known being in Achaia Phthiotis (see Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 1970, 133), which might have been acquired by Athens in connection with the defence of Euboea – see Gomme, *HCT* iii, p. 674, who also mentions the suggestion that it may have been an unknown place near Methana. Strabo mentions another in Messenia (8.3.25: see Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 1970, 84–5), which might have been captured as a result of the Pylos operations, and Stephanos of Byzantion, s. v. 'Pteleon', says there were others in Ionia (cf. Thuc. 8.24.2 and 31.2) and the Troad.
- 8 On Corinth's part in all this see R. Seager, 'After the peace of Nicias: diplomacy and policy 421–416 bc', *CQ* 70 (1976), pp. 249–69; Kagan, 1981, 33–45; and Salmon, 1984, 324–9.
- 9 See Gomme and Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 31–4, and map I facing p. 34.
- 10 For the time at which ephors took office see Gomme and Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 38, and Ste Croix, 1972, 320–1. Kagan, 1981, 50–2, is right to be wary of the significance of the choice of ephors opposed to the peace, but his discussion is vitiated by his

- acceptance of Rahe's erroneous view, 1980, 385–401, that ephors were chosen by lot: see above, n. 15 to Chapter 1. Presumably the attitude of the ephors opposed to the peace reflected that of a growing number of Spartans.
- 11 Gomme and Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 44–5, see a difficulty here because the Atheno-Spartan alliance does not appear to preclude either party from concluding alliances with others. But 5.23.1 and 2 do state that if Spartan or Athenian territory were to be violated, both states must make peace together, and it is possible that the Athenians thought that the new Spartan–Boiotian alliance contravened this. The Boiotians had repeatedly violated Athenian territory in the early years of the war, and had not yet concluded peace with Athens (cf. 5.26.2). This interpretation is confirmed by what Thucydides says in 5.42.2 and, particularly, 5.46.2.
 - 12 On all this see Hatzfeld, 1951, 89ff.; Gomme and Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 51–3; Kagan, 1981, 67–70; Ellis, 1989, 36–40.
 - 13 So rightly Kagan, 1981, 72–4, as against Meyer, 1899, 354–6.
 - 14 Plutarch (*Nik.* 10.8; *Alk.* 15.1) says Alkibiades was elected after Nikias' return from his embassy to Sparta and before the new alliance was concluded. The truth is probably that he had already been elected, but entered office then – see Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 69 (cf. pp. 52 and 54). Isokrates (16.15), though inaccurate in other respects, may be right that Alkibiades' Athenian hoplites numbered 200.
 - 15 On Achaian attitudes at this time see J. K. Anderson, 'A topographical and historical study of Achaia', *BSA* 49 (1954), pp. 72–92.
 - 16 Andrewes' notes here – *HCT* iv, pp. 72–3 – seem to me to be too critical of what Thucydides says.
 - 17 The Peloponnesian Leuktra has not been securely located, but was probably near the modern Leondhári – see Leake, *Travels in the Morea* ii (London, 1830), pp. 322ff.
 - 18 I agree with Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 73–4, that the 'cities' referred to here are not those of the *periokoi*, as, e.g., Ste Croix argues, 1972, 345–6, but Andrewes was probably wrong to say the *periokoi* were 'individually integrated into the framework of the Spartan army, not organized in city contingents' (p. 74): see Lazenby, 1985, 13–16.
 - 19 See, e.g., Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 74, referring to H. Popp, *Die Einwirkung von Vorzeichen, Opfern und Festen auf die Kriegführung der Griechen* (Diss. Erlangen, 1957), pp. 42–6; Kagan, 1981, 84–6. The quotation in my text is from Busolt, 1880, 154.
 - 20 Kagan, 1981, 85–6.
 - 21 Busolt, 1880, 155; Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 76 – for a contrary view, Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 74; Kagan, 1981, 86–7.
 - 22 Kagan, 1981, 88, says the Argive complaint was that 'the Athenians had allowed them [the Spartans] to cross Argive territory': presumably he means 'Athenian territory'.
 - 23 For the suggestion see Kagan, 1981, 90–2, and the references in n. 43 on 92. Kagan dismisses Gomme's objections (*HCT* iv, pp. 78–9), but in describing Andrewes' observations on them as 'sensible' fails to mention that he endorsed 'the general line of Gomme's argument' (n. 1 on p. 79, and cf. n. 2).
 - 24 Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 79, makes the point about the harvest, but does not mention the helots. In describing the Spartan mobilization here (5.57.1), Thucydides uses the same phrase as in 5.64.2 about the mobilization before Mantinea: 'the Spartans themselves and the helots in full force'. Since he never uses it elsewhere, he presumably means that the forces on both occasions were exceptionally large, and the order of words suggests that 'in full force' (*pandēmei*) is to be taken with both '[the Spartans] themselves' and with 'the helots', though I implied the contrary in 1985, n. 1 on 197. It is unlikely that he meant all the helots were mobilized, but he surely meant more than just Brasidas' veterans and the *neodamôdeis*, which is Andrewes' suggestion (*HCT* iv, p. 79). Perhaps he meant that mobilizing the Spartans 'in full

- force' involved mobilizing a similar number of helots, since each Spartan hoplite was usually accompanied by a helot soldier-servant (cf. 4.8.9). For other views see Hunt, 1998, 60–2: his own notion that the helots formed the rear ranks of the Spartan phalanx at Mantinea is bizarre – see above, n. 15 to Chapter 1. In any case, helots play no part in Thucydides' account of either campaign.
- 25 Busolt's estimates of 1,500 Tegeates and 2,000 other Arcadians (GG, iii. 2, n. 1 on 1238) seem too low for the former and too high for the latter. For the possibility that there were 2,400 Tegeates at the Nemea see Lazenby, 1985, 136.
 - 26 This is presumably how Busolt, *loc. cit.*, arrived at his estimate of 4,200 Spartans, of which Kagan, 1981, n. 40 on 91, apparently approves.
 - 27 On the question why Thucydides does not mention *perioikoi* either here or in his account of the Mantinea campaign see n. 18 above and Lazenby, 1985, 15–16.
 - 28 For the view that Agis' situation was 'desperate' see Kagan, 1981, 93, following Henderson, 1927, 305–6.
 - 29 As does Henderson, 1927, 306, quoted by Kagan, *loc. cit.* It is Kagan, 1981, 93–6, who suggests the Argives were led by oligarchic generals.
 - 30 See Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 81–2.
 - 31 Kagan, 1981, 99–100, argues that the Boiotians had already appeared, but Thucydides' statement (5.59.3) that the Argives were 'cut off in the middle' need not, and probably does not, mean that they were literally surrounded – if they had been, their confidence is inexplicable – and 5.58.4 does not mean the Argives had 'faced the Boeotians at Nemea' as Kagan claims (100).
 - 32 Kagan, 1981, 101–2, assumes this was an ephor, citing Xen., *Hell.* 2.4.36 and *LP* 13.5 for the alleged rule that two ephors accompanied a king on campaign. But 'one of those in authority' is an odd way to describe an ephor – elsewhere (6.88.10) they are distinguished from 'those in authority' – and the rule is itself dubious: see n. 16 to Chapter 1 above.
 - 33 For the military explanation see, e.g., Henderson, 1927, 314–16; for the political Kagan, 1981, 91ff.
 - 34 Kagan, 1981, 100–4. He gives the game away when he admits that 'Thucydides tells us nothing of such a conflict' (103) – see Gomme's comment on such speculation in *HCT* iv, pp. 87–8 on 5.61.2. Andrewes remarks that one of Gomme's notes refers to V. Ehrenberg, *JHS* 67 (1947), pp. 55–6, and a fragment of Eupolis' *Demoi* which apparently relates to this expeditionary force.
 - 35 Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 83. Kagan, 1981, n. 75 on 103, dismisses this explanation as 'weak'. For horse-transport see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 94 and n. 1, 156 and 227–30.
 - 36 Kagan, 1981, 104. The suggestion that the Spartans similarly contrived to arrive just too late for the battle of Marathon is equally absurd: see Lazenby, 1993, 53–4.
 - 37 Kagan, 1981, 102, assumes that it was the Argive magistrates who tried to prevent the Athenians addressing the assembly, but as Andrewes points out (*HCT* iv, p. 87), in a democracy, it was probably some sort of council which decided whether foreign representatives should be allowed to address the assembly, as at Athens, and Herodotos provides evidence that there was such a council at Argos (7.148.3 and 149.1–2).
 - 38 For speculation that Alkibiades had failed to be elected *stratēgos* because his policy had been rejected see, e.g., Kagan, 1981, 90–1 and 103, but cf. Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 87–8. Diodoros' statement that Alkibiades was a private citizen (12.79.1) can be dismissed in view of what Thucydides says, unless he simply means that he was not *stratēgos*, as Kagan suggests, 1981, n. 73 on 102.
 - 39 Kagan, 1981, 104.
 - 40 Cf. Andrewes' comment, *HCT* iv, p. 88.
 - 41 For the location of Orchomenos see Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 1970, 91. For the

- suggestion that the Spartans may have deposited their hostages there on their way to Phleious see Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 88.
- 42 The Penguin translation has '10,000', as does Kagan, 1981, 105, and, surprisingly, Kallet, 2001, n. 8 on 6–7. But the Greek text says '100,000' (*deka muriasī*), and although this was a huge sum – if calculated in Aiginetan *drachmai* it was equivalent to over 23 talents – the kings of Sparta were immensely wealthy, and 10,000 *drachmai* would have been peanuts to them: Herodotos says the Athenians fined Miltiades 50 talents (6.136.3). Demolishing a king's house seems to have been a traditional mark of disapproval – cf. Herodotos 6.72.2, with H. W. Parke, 'The deposing of Spartan kings', *CQ* 39 (1945), p. 111, and W. R. Connor, 'The razing of the house in Greek society', *TAPA* 115 (1985), pp. 79–102. The proposal to punish Agis was probably made in the assembly (Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 89–90).
 - 43 See Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 90–1. Kagan, 1981, 105, misses the point. Diodoros (12.78.6) says Agis was not to be allowed to do anything without the advisers' consent, but this is improbable.
 - 44 This is the view of Kagan, 1981, 105, and of Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 89, citing an earlier article by Kagan, 'Argive politics and policy after the Peace of Nicias', *CP* 57 (1962), p. 215.
 - 45 The Penguin translation has 'in greater numbers than on any other occasion', but Gomme is probably right to argue (*HCT* iv, p. 91) that 'as never previously' should be taken with 'swift' ('*oxeia*').
 - 46 See Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 91–3.
 - 47 Cf. Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 93, but his statement that 'strategoi and others were often over military age' is odd: Xenophon, *Hell.* 5.4.13, implies that no one over the age of sixty, not even a king, was obliged to serve outside Spartan territory.
 - 48 Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 97, rightly rejects Woodhouse's suggestion (1933, 45) that Agis wanted to cover the withdrawal of his wagon-train, since he could have done this just as well by deploying in the plain. But he accepts Woodhouse's later suggestion (1933, 111–13) that the withdrawal was a feint. It may be significant that Agis is said to have abandoned campaigns three times because of bad omens (3.89.1, 5.54.1–2 and, presumably, 5.55.3), apart from his erratic behaviour in 418.
 - 49 See G. Fougères, *Mantinée et l'Arcadie Orientale* (Paris, 1898), ch. 2; Gomme, *HCT* iv, pp. 97–8; but cf. Pritchett, *SAGT* i, pp. 122–34, and S. J. and H. Hodkinson, 'Mantineia and the Mantinike: settlement and society in a Greek polis', *BSA* 76 (1981), pp. 239–96.
 - 50 Pace Gomme and Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 100–1. All such arguments presuppose that no ancient commander ever made a mistake, and this is harder to believe in Agis' case than in most. For other incidents in which the Spartans were surprised see, e.g., Xen., *Hell.* 5.4.39, 6.5.17 and 7.4.23. It is Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 100, who suggests the Argives and their allies moved at night. Kagan, 1981, pp. 119ff., apparently assumes there was a wood and that this explains the Spartans' surprise.
 - 51 A hint that this is so is Thucydides' use of the word '*exepлагésan*' here for the Spartans' 'surprise', for he uses a cognate word – '*kataplagentes*' – for the Argives' surprise at the Spartan withdrawal from the hill – again 'from close by' (cf. '*ex oligou*' in 5.65.5, '*di' oligou*' in 5.66.1) – and there is no question of the Argives and their allies' being taken by surprise.
 - 52 See Lazenby, 1985, 42–3 and references there. Cawkwell, 1983, 385–400, suggests the Spartan army 'appeared bigger' because it had a longer front, but although this might explain 5.68.1, it does not explain 5.71.2. Kagan, 1981, 123, seems to assume six *morai* were present, and does not appear to think there is a problem.
 - 53 Thucydides actually says there were seven *lochoi* (5.68.3), but one of them probably consisted of the Brasidaeioi and *neodamôdeis* – see J. Beloch, *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt* (Leipzig, 1886), p. 140; Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 112. Cawkwell,

- 1983, 386, describes this view as 'ill-grounded', but it is more plausible than his own view that all seven *lochoi* were Spartan.
- 54 Kagan, 1981, 123.
- 55 Cf. Lazenby, 1985, 129 on the 'few' Spartans.
- 56 On this see Lazenby, 1985, 130. The two *lochoi* were to be taken from the main Spartan line, not from the Arcadians or the 'few' Spartans to its right, as Woodhouse, 1933, pp. 94ff., and Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 119, saw. I do not understand why Kagan, 1981, 125, finds this 'far from compelling'. On whether the polemarch Aristokles was King Pleistoanax's brother, see Gomme and Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 120. Kagan, 1981, n. 58 on 128, does not appreciate the force of Andrewes' objection.
- 57 When, e.g., Herodotos says Amompharetos was one of the bravest men on the field at Plataia, despite his earlier insubordination (9.71.2 and 53.2ff.), he presumably reflects Spartan views, and I know of no example of a Spartan's being punished for disobedience. Kagan's discussion of the polemarchs' behaviour (1981, 129–30) misses the point. 'Cowardice' was as much a catch-all charge in Sparta as *maiestas* ('treason') was in imperial Rome.
- 58 Kagan, 1981, 126 and ns 53 and 54, rightly rejects Woodhouse's suggestion (1933, 82–3) that Agis deliberately left a gap in his line to entice the 1,000 picked Argives into it, and the even more extreme notion of D. Gillis, 'Collusion at Mantinea', *RIL* 97 (1963), pp. 199–226, that he had preconcerted this with oligarchs at Argos.
- 59 Kagan, e.g., accepts the story (1981, 131–2), but see Gomme and Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 124–5.
- 60 Compare the Mantineians at Olpai: 3.108.3.
- 61 Cf. H. T. Wade-Gery, *Essays in Greek history* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 276–7. For a contrary view see J. S. Morrison, *CQ* 36 (1942), n. 4 on p. 72.
- 62 For the identification of the two bodies see, e.g., Kagan, 1981, 135, but his statement that after Mantinea the Thousand 'were the only significant military force in Argos' and that 'their brave showing' had enhanced their prestige goes beyond the evidence. He also says that the Thousand 'joined an equal number of Spartans in an expedition to Sikyon', but Thucydides says it was 'the Spartans themselves' who dealt with Sikyon, though his language is obscure – see Andrewes' note, *HCT* iv, p. 149. Aristotle's identification of the two bodies (*Politics* 1304a25), like Diodoros', may derive from Ephoros.
- 63 See Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 150–1.
- 64 Kagan, 1981, 140, says the envoys from the democrats sought to re-establish 'friendly relations and probably an alliance', but the previous peace and alliance had been established by a democratic government.
- 65 Kagan, 1981, 139–40.
- 66 See Kagan, 1981, 141–2.
- 67 See Andrewes, *HCT* iv, p. 151.
- 68 For Orneai's allegiance at the time see Gomme, *HCT* iv, p. 222. For its location see Andrewes' long note, *HCT* iv, pp. 107–10, and the map facing p. 83. In the summer of 1961, Hope Simpson and I located another possible site about 2 miles (3 kilometres) south-southeast of the village of Gymnos – see Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 1970, 66–7.
- 69 On this see Andrewes, *HCT* iv, pp. 155–88, and references there; Kagan, 1981, 149–52; Bosworth, 1993, 30–44; and, now, Kallet, 2001, 9–20.
- 70 M. Treu, 'Athen und Melos und der Melierdialog des Thukydides', *Historia* 2 (1952/3), pp. 252–73, and 'Athen und Karthago und die Thukydideische Darstellung', *Historia* 3 (1954/5), pp. 41–57, and A. E. Raubitschek, 'War Melos tributpflichtig?', *Historia* 12 (1963), pp. 78–83, argue that the fact that Melos was assessed in 425 shows that she then became an ally of Athens, but see W. Eberhardt,

'Der Melierdialog und die inschriften *ATL A9 (IG i² 63+)* und *IG² 97+*', *Historia* 8 (1959), pp. 284–314, and W. Kierdorf, 'Zum Melier-Dialog des Thukydides', *RhM* 105 (1962), pp. 253–6.

- 71 Andokides (4.22) says the decree was proposed by Alkibiades, Plutarch (*Alk.* 16.5) that he supported it. On my one and only visit to Melos, in the spring of 1959, memories of what happened all those years ago were made especially poignant by the poppies which carpeted the ancient site.

8 SICILIAN ADVENTURE

- 1 Cf. Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 221. Diodoros (12.82.7) also claims that Egesta had previously appealed to Syracuse, Akragas and Carthage. For the renewal of the alliance between Athens and Leontinoi in 433/2 see ML 64=Fornara 125.
- 2 On the the treaty see ML 37=Fornara 81; Kagan, 1981, n. 2 on 159–60, and references there. Its redating to 418 by M. Chambers, R. Gallucci and P. Spanos, 'Athens' alliance with Egesta in the year of Antiphon', *ZPE* 83 (1990), pp. 38–63, was contested by A. Henry, 'Through a laser beam darkly', *ZPE* 91 (1992), pp. 137–43, and although Chambers restated the case in *CJ* 88 (1992), pp. 25–31 and *ZPE* 98 (1993), pp. 171–4, it still cannot be regarded as proven, particularly in the light of what Thucydides implies – see Cawkwell, 1997, 12–13.
- 3 On these famous tricks see Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 312–13, and Kallet, 2001, 69–79; on the original Egestan offers to pay for the expedition see Kallet, 2001, 27–31.
- 4 On the ambiguities, perhaps deliberate, in the generals' instructions see Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 228–9.
- 5 On Thucydides here see, e.g., Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 223–64; Kagan, 1981, 159–91; Cawkwell, 1997, 75–91; Kallet, 2001, 31–48. His account of the second assembly gives perhaps the best idea to be found anywhere in the ancient sources of what such an assembly would have been like.
- 6 Meiggs and Lewis used the text prepared by Dover for *HCT* iv, pp. 223–7. The alternative context of the sending of Demosthenes with reinforcements in 413 is advocated by R. Thomsen, *Eisphora: a study in direct taxation* (Copenhagen, 1965), pp. 174–5; H. Mattingley, 'Athenian finances in the Peloponnesian War', *BCH* 92 (1968), pp. 453–4; and, more recently, by Kallet, 2001, 183–95.
- 7 On Nikias' position see Dover, 1960, 73. On Aristophanes' apparent reference to one of the debates on the expedition in the *Lysistrata* (391–4), see Sommerstein's commentary (Warminster, 1990), pp. 173–4.
- 8 See Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 229.
- 9 Pace Kagan, 1981, 165 – see Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 197.
- 10 On this passage see Dover, *HCT* v, pp. 423–7; Rhodes, 1988, 244–5; Hornblower, 1991, 347–8; Cawkwell, 1997, 76–82; Rood, 1998, 159–82; Kallet, 2001, 115–18.
- 11 On the herms see Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 288–9.
- 12 Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 264–88, sets out the evidence and problems with exemplary clarity. See also D. MacDowell's edition of Andokides, *On the Mysteries* (Oxford, 1962); Kagan, 1981, 192–209; Ellis, 1989, 58–62; William D. Furlley, *Andokides and the herms*, *BICS Supplement* 65 (London, 1996); Pelling, 2000, 18–43.
- 13 See Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 308–10. On Thucydides' description of the departure of the expedition see Kallet, 2001, 48–66.
- 14 One MS has '600' here and since it was usual to have ten hoplite marines on each fighting trireme (see 3.91.2–95.2, 4.76.1–101.3, etc.) this may be the correct reading. It is usually assumed that thetes serving as marines would have to be equipped by the state – see, e.g., Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 310 – but they might have inherited equipment from wealthier ancestors, and the wealth classes, which go back to Solon in the early sixth century, may by now have borne little relationship to economic reality. Thetes

- might well have been able to afford the equipment, which was not very expensive – see V. D. Hanson, *The other Greeks* (New York, 1995), pp. 245 and 294–301.
- 15 Kagan, 1981, 210, says this was the largest body of hoplites Athens had used during the war, but he seems to have forgotten the 7,000 at Delion (4.93.3 and 94.1).
 - 16 Laffi, 1970, n. 71 on p. 294; Liebeschütz, 1968, 292–3, thinks Syracuse might have accepted the ultimatum if Alkibiades had succeeded in winning a significant number of allies.
 - 17 For a list to 1970 see Laffi, *loc. cit.*, and add Green, 1970, 141; Kagan, 1981, 215–16. On whether Thucydides thought Lamachos' strategy was right see Donini, 1964, 116–19; Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 419–21; Liebeschütz, 1968, 299–302. Kallet, 2001, especially 151–9, takes a lower view of Nikias than I do.
 - 18 For the first see Liebeschütz, 1968, 292 and n. 18; for the second Laffi, 1970, 296, and Kagan, 1981, 216.
 - 19 See, most notably, Cawkwell, 1997, 83.
 - 20 Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 316–17.
 - 21 See, e.g., Kagan, 1981, 228.
 - 22 See Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 482–4 and map facing p. 481. For a contrary view see Green, 1970, pp. 155ff., and Kagan, 1981, 230–3.
 - 23 A. Holm, *Geschichte Siziliens im Altertum* ii (Leipzig, 1870–98), p. 27, places the battle south of the Anapos.
 - 24 The positioning of the baggage-carriers is puzzling since they were behind the battle-line, in any case, and near the palisade. Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 343, suggests they were there to supply the fighters' needs if the battle moved away from the camp, but, if so, this is another unique occurrence in classical battles. Perhaps, rather, it was hoped their presence in the hollow square would give the impression that the army was much larger than it was – cf., e.g., Xen., *Hell.* 6.4.9. Kagan, 1981, 234, says the hoplites forming the hollow square were 'three deep', but Thucydides says they, too, were eight deep (6.67.1).
 - 25 Cf., e.g., Kagan, 1981, 236ff., quoting G. Grote, *A history of Greece* (New York, 1855), vii, p. 223, and Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 1323.
 - 26 Cf. Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 419–21, referring to Donini, 1964, 116ff. E. C. Kopff, 'Thucydides 7.42.3: an unrecognized fragment of Philistus', *GRBS* 17 (1976), pp. 23ff. and 220–1, argues that the passage in question is not by Thucydides, but see M. W. Dickie, 'Thucydides, not Philistus', *GRBS* 17 (1976), pp. 217–19.
 - 27 See the reference to Dover in the previous note, and Kallet, 2001, 105–6 and 154.
 - 28 For this interpretation see Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 471–3 and map facing p. 469, and Kagan, 1981, 244 and map on 232. For the contrary view see H. P. Drögermüller, *Syrakus* (*Gymnasium Beiheft* vi, Heidelberg, 1969), pp. 71–96, and Green, 1970, 182–6.
 - 29 On the topography of Euryelos and the early siege operations see Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 466ff., and for criticism of the differing views of Green see his review in *Phoenix* 26 (1972), pp. 297–300. Kern, 1999, 122–33, adds little to earlier studies, and is wrong to say the Syracusans initially had no fleet (123). Thucydides 7.22 does not suggest the eighty warships they had in 413 were new, and 6.34.4ff. implies they already had some in 415.
 - 30 On this see Dover, *HCT* iv, 481–2.

9 DISASTER IN SICILY

- 1 Gylippos' father, Kleandridas, had been exiled in 446/5 (see Plut., *Per.* 22.3). This may explain why the son was a *mothax*, i.e. a non-citizen Spartan raised as a foster-brother to a boy of citizen-status, who subsequently acquired citizenship, if the tradition preserved by Aelian (*VH* 12.43) is true. On *mothakes* see now S. J.

- Hodkinson, 'Servile and free dependants of the Spartan oikos', in M. Moggi and G. Cordiano (eds), *Schiavi e dipendenti nell'Ambito dell'Oikos e della familia* (XXII Colloquio GIREA, Pisa, 1997), pp. 45–71, and Hodkinson, 2000, 355–6.
- 2 Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 382–3.
 - 3 Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 476.
 - 4 Green, 1970, 224ff., criticizes the occupation of Plemmyrion, but cf. Roisman, 1993, n. 109 on 54.
 - 5 On Nikias' letter see H. D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 190–2; Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 386–91.
 - 6 Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 150–7.
 - 7 For criticism of Demosthenes' dilatoriness in getting to Sicily see, e.g., Green, 1970, 250ff., and cf. Roisman, 1993, 53–5.
 - 8 On these technical terms and the fight itself see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 161–7.
 - 9 On Athenian options at this point and Demosthenes' decision to attack the counterwork see Roisman, 1993, 56–9.
 - 10 See Dover's note on the three *proteichismata* in *HCT* iv, p. 478.
 - 11 For a good analysis of this famous night action see Roisman, 1993, 59–63.
 - 12 See Bruce Catton, *This hallowed ground* (New York, 1956), p. 294.
 - 13 See Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 480–1, but I do not understand his view that Thucydides' description of the place where Eurymedon was killed refers to the northern end of the harbour. How could Eurymedon, commanding the Athenian right, be caught in the northern part of the harbour?
 - 14 On the topography here see Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 484. Kagan, 1981, n. 54 on 326, argues that 'chélē', the word Dover translates as 'spit', means an artificial construction, not a natural feature. But this is not the meaning in Thucydides 8.90.4 – see Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 303 – and probably not the meaning in Thucydides 1.63.1, despite the scholia and Gomme's note there (*HCT* i, p. 219). In any case, Kagan's map on 232 contradicts what he says in the note on 326.
 - 15 Cf. Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 160–1.
 - 16 Cf., e.g., Polybios' description of the battle off Chios in 201 (16.2–7).
 - 17 This implies that provisions were usually carried by slaves.
 - 18 On the topography of the march see Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 455–60; Green, 1970, 321ff.; Kagan, 1981, 329–53. It is Green who argues that the 'Akraian rock' had nothing to do with Akrai and lay northwest of Syracuse, but the weakness of his view is that he has to invent a second message to the Sikels during the night of the retreat to the sea, whereas Thucydides implies that there was only one message, sent before the Athenians left Syracuse.
 - 19 Kagan, 1981, 344, seems to think their plan was still to make for Katana, but this is to ignore what Thucydides says, though in either case they were taking a very roundabout route.
 - 20 As Dover says (*HCT* iv, p. 458), marching up the Kakyparis would have eventually brought the Athenians to Akrai, and from there they could have made for the vicinity of Kamarina and Gela, as Thucydides says they intended (7.80.2). For criticism of Demosthenes' conduct on the retreat see Roisman, 1993, 69.
 - 21 Fiume/Fiumara di Noto: Kagan, 1981, n. 36 on 347, following Green, 1970, n. 14 on 330; Cava Mammaladi: Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 446–7. Presumably the Athenians still hoped to rendezvous with the Sikels by marching up the Erineos.
 - 22 Kagan, 1981, n. 33 on 346.
 - 23 Cf. Lazenby, 1978, 187–9.
 - 24 Cf. Lazenby, 1996, 106.
 - 25 Finley, in the Penguin translation of Thucydides (revised edition, 1972), makes too much of this in Appendix I, pp. 610–11, arguing that it shows that 'not all the island

- populations felt themselves enslaved'. Rather, the majority of these islanders will have distrusted the Syracusans and preferred to stick with their mates – see Cawkwell, 1997, 99. On Thucydides' statement (7.82.3) that the money taken from Demosthenes' remaining 6,000 men filled four shields see Kallet, 2001, 174–6; on Demosthenes' conduct on the retreat and attempted suicide see Roisman, 1993, 69–70 and n. 148.
- 26 On this offer see Kallet, 2001, 176–81.
- 27 See above, n. 21. On the whole, I prefer Dover's identification of these rivers.
- 28 On the controversies among the later sources about this see Dover's note in *HCT* iv, p. 461.
- 29 For this interpretation of the words '*dia tēn pasan nenomismenēn epitédeusin*' see Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 463, though I am not sure that Thucydides did not mean that Nikias had 'dedicated his whole life to conventional virtue'.
- 30 See Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 461–4, for a summary of Nikias' career, and for Thucydides' portrait of him, Rood, 1998, 182–201, and Kallet, 2001, 151–9. Kallet's book as a whole is a superb analysis of the themes of power, finance and leadership as exemplified in Thucydides' sixth and seventh books.

10 A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR

- 1 On Thucydides 7.27–30 see Dover, *HCT* iv, pp. 400–10, and Kallet, 2001, 121–46.
- 2 Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 400.
- 3 For the suggestion see Westlake, 1938, 35–6. On the Spartans' renewed attention to the need for a navy and the requisite financial resources see Kallet, 2001, 238–42, but in remarking (240) that at the outset of the war they did not 'seem ready to grasp that they needed these to beat Athens', she seems to forget Archidamos' remarks in 1.80–2. In general, Kallet too readily accepts Thucydides' criticisms of Spartan hesitation and slowness.
- 4 Cf., e.g., the references in n. 18 to Chapter 4.
- 5 Cf. Andrewes' long and careful note in *HCT* v, pp. 13–16.
- 6 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 16–18; Kagan, 1987, 28ff.
- 7 Lewis, 1977, n. 25 on 87, doubted whether the news of the Athenian defeat in Sicily could have reached the king of Persia before he made his demands on the two satraps, but see Kagan, 1987, 32 and n. 33. Kallet, 2001, n. 51 on 242, suggests the king had learned of the abolition of the tribute by the Athenians (7.28.4).
- 8 Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 24–5. Kagan, 1987, 39 and n. 56, while referring to Andrewes, oddly accepts the emendation to '*Spiraion*' (*Spiraeum*) which Andrewes rejects.
- 9 For discussion of the episode see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 26–7; Kagan, 1987, 42; Ellis, 1989, 67–8. Westlake's view (1938, 31–40) that the quarrel was due to the failure of Agis' 'Northern Plan' is far-fetched.
- 10 For a summary of the information Thucydides provides on ship numbers in 412 and 411 see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 27–32. For the Athenian decision to use their reserve fund see Kallet, 2001, 246–50.
- 11 M. I. Finley, in his notes to the revised edition of the Penguin translation of Thucydides (1972), thinks that the first two of Thucydides' treaties are only drafts which somehow or other got into his text – cf. Cawkwell, 1997, 47 and n. 15 on 135. For other views see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 40 and 143–6; Kagan, 1987, 47–50.
- 12 Hatzfeld, 1951, 222–3.
- 13 On this see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 44–7; Kagan, 1987, 56–7.
- 14 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 48.
- 15 Another possible naval commander from the *perioikoi* may have served at Aigospotamoi – see Cartledge, 1979, 263, and ML 95(k). But the reading in the inscription is very uncertain.

- 16 Bean and Cook, 1957, 106–18.
- 17 For this translation of *‘pros orgên tês xumphoras’* see Kagan, 1987, n. 50 on 64. Kagan also makes the point about this being the last Argive help to Athens, though 8.86 and Xen., *Hell.* 1.3.13 suggest the Argives nominally remained allies.
- 18 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 70–2. For what Thucydides says about Spartan finances at this time see Kallet, 2001, 250–6.
- 19 Cf. Kagan, 1987, 70–7, following Hatzfeld, 1951, 225–8, and Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 1436ff. But see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 93–7, and Rood, 1998, 262–5.
- 20 Cf. Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 73 and 28–9.
- 21 For its possible location see J. Keil, *RE* xx, pp. 384–5.
- 22 See G. E. Bean and J. M. Cook, ‘The Cnidia’, *BSA* 47 (1952), pp. 173–9. In 1959 I sailed round this coast from Marmaris (ancient Physkos) to Knidos and on to Bodrum (Halikarnassos).
- 23 Andrewes’ explanation (*HCT* v, p. 82) is that either an ordinary boat, however small, was thought safer than a trireme, or that ‘the Peloponnesians could not afford to detach single triremes as the Athenians could’. Neither is very convincing, but they are better than van de Maele’s suggestion (‘Livre VIII de Thucydide et la politique de Sparte en Asie Mineure (412–411 av. J. C.)’, *Phoenix* 25 (1971), p. 44) that Astyochochos had Therimenes eliminated to cover up his own treason. On this see Kagan, 1987, 83–4, and references there. On the second treaty between the Spartans and the Persians see Kallet, 2001, 256–9.
- 24 See, e.g., Kagan, 1987, 86–7.
- 25 For the possibility that the incident described by Xenophon in *Hellenika* 1.1.35 has been misplaced from 411 see Krentz, 1989b, 107, and see 1989a, 15–18, for similar misplacements.
- 26 Bean and Cook, 1957, 119–26.
- 27 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 29–30.
- 28 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 88–9.
- 29 Andrewes (*HCT* v, p. 89) says Teutloussa is ‘the moden Séskli, a little east of Chalke’, but my map (Kümmerly + Frey 1:1,000,000 Griechenland) puts Séskli (Sésklion) just off the southern tip of Syme, which makes more sense, and calls the island east of Chalke ‘Alimnia’ (‘Harbourless’) – not a promising haven for a defeated fleet. The joke about Charminos’ loss of a naval battle in Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazousai*, line 804, is usually related to this battle.
- 30 Kagan, 1987, 89, says the Athenians ‘sought an encounter’, but Thucydides specifically says they did not (8.43.1).
- 31 It should be remembered that Rhodes was not yet a unified state and that Rhodes city did not yet exist – that was to come in 408/7 (DS 13.75.1). This assembly of the peoples of all three ancient cities is, indeed, their first recorded joint action.
- 32 For the last tribute paid to Athens before the revolt see A. G. Woodhead, *Hesperia* 17 (1948), n. 4 on p. 56. At three obols a day, 94 ships would have cost over 1½ talents a day. For the chronological difficulties created by Thucydides’ reference to an interval of eighty days see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 147–9.
- 33 For criticism of Sparta’s pusillanimity here see Kagan, 1987, 93–4, but he lays too much stress on Spartan acceptance of inferiority in seamanship. For the point that Sparta had no need to fight see Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 66, which Kagan quotes with approval in 1987, 92–3. Neither mentions the necessity for drying out triremes, for which see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 151–2. Kallet, 2001, 259, is also too critical of the Spartans here.
- 34 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 93–7.
- 35 On Astyochochos’ alleged treason see n. 23 above.
- 36 On the chronological difficulties of Thucydides 8.52 see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 121–3.

- 37 For various interpretations of this passage see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 134–5.
- 38 Kagan, 1987, 95–6.
- 39 For detailed discussions of the revolution see, e.g., Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 153–6; Rhodes, 1981, 362–415; Kagan, 1987, 106–57; and, for the financial background, Kallet, 2001, 262–8. For a percipient summary see Hornblower, 2002, 177–80.
- 40 For this kind of behaviour by Spartans see Simon Hornblower, ‘Sticks, stones and Spartans’, in Hans van Wees (ed.), *War and violence in ancient Greece* (London, 2000), pp. 57–82. I am grateful to Professor Hornblower for sending me an offprint of his essay, though he, perhaps, goes too far.
- 41 See Andrewes’ notes on the correct readings and interpretation of this passage: *HCT* v, pp. 286–8.
- 42 Diodoros refers to 300 ships, but if this is not just a mistake, it is possible that 300 had originally been ordered, but only 147 had so far arrived (cf. Thucydides 8.87.5). For the Egyptian revolt see D. M. Lewis, ‘The Phoenician fleet in 411’, *Historia* 7 (1958), pp. 392–7. For other discussions of the problems see, e.g., D. Lateiner, ‘Tissaphernes and the Phoenician fleet (Thucydides 8.87)’, *TAPA* 106 (1976), pp. 267–90, and Kallet, 2001, 274–7.
- 43 On the text see Andrewes’ note in *HCT* v, pp. 303–6. Kagan, 1987, 190 and n. 10, may be right that Andrewes sees too many difficulties.
- 44 Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 323, speculates that these might have included the fourteen survivors of the fight off Eretria, but (i) would there have been time for them to get home? and (ii) Thucydides says the Athenians ‘manned’ (*‘epléroun’*) the twenty ships, whereas the fourteen from Eretria already had crews.
- 45 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 328–9. I do not propose to discuss the controversies about the precise powers of the Five Thousand: see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 323–8, and Rhodes, 1981, 411–12.
- 46 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 331–9, and note his remark in the first paragraph on p. 331 that ‘Argument is needed to elucidate every phrase but Ἀθηναῖοι φαίνονται [*Athēnaioi phainontai*: ‘the Athenians appear’]’!

11 WAR IN THE NORTH

- 1 The actual number of Methymnaian ships is missing from Thucydides’ text in 8.100.5, but what he says in 8.100.1–5 enables us to work out that there were five.
- 2 See Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 97. For the location of the various places mentioned see Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 347–9.
- 3 E. g. Kagan, 1987, 222–3.
- 4 See Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 281–3, as against, e.g., Westlake, 1969, n. 38 on 193–4.
- 5 Andrewes, *HCT* v, pp. 351–2.
- 6 As Krentz suggests, 1989b, 87. From here on, all references to Xenophon’s *Hellenika* in the text will omit the abbreviation ‘*Hell.*’.
- 7 The Euripos is now spanned at this point by a bridge which retracts under the road at either end. I can vouch for what Diodoros says about the current (13.47.5). See also *Blue Guide: Greece* (fourth edition, London, 1981), pp. 373–4.
- 8 See n. 1 above.
- 9 Triremes appear to have carried two sails, the larger one on a mast probably stepped amidships, the other, the so-called ‘boat-sail’ (*akateion*), on one stepped forward. The larger sails were regularly left ashore when a battle was in prospect (cf., e.g., Xen. 6.2.7) – the ancient equivalent of ‘clearing for action’ – but the smaller ones could still be used, given a favourable wind (cf. Xen. *loc. cit.*): see Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 175–8.
- 10 On this see Krentz’s note, 1989b, 97. Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 86, accept it as possible.

- 11 See Andrewes, 1982, 22. I cannot understand how Kagan can think Chaireas was landed at Artaki(e) (1987, ns. 108 and 109 on 241–2): he would then have had to march through Kyzikos to take part in the battle.
- 12 See Andrewes, 1982, 19–25; Kagan, 1987, 238–44. V. J. Gray's attempt ('The value of Diodorus Siculus for the years 411–386 BC', *Hermes* 115 (1987), pp. 80–4) to argue that Diodoros' source, Ephoros, invented the ambush at sea and Pharnabazos' part in the land fighting is not convincing, and is even less so if Diodoros' ultimate source, via Ephoros, was the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia*, as Andrewes suggests, 1982, 22.
- 13 Andrewes, 1982, 20–1; Kagan, 1987, 239–41. Both of them worry too much about the possibility that the Athenians might have been spotted by lookouts posted by Mindaros on the hills above Kyzikos and Artaki(e). This is to assume Mindaros would have posted pickets, and it is just as likely that he omitted to do so.
- 14 Kagan, 1987, n. 109 on 241–2.
- 15 Pace Kagan, 1987, 245.
- 16 Xenophon (1.1.22) and Diodoros (13.64.2) say the toll was imposed on ships coming 'from the Black Sea', but Polybios (4.44.4) says it was on those going to the Black Sea. F. W. Walbank, *A historical commentary on Polybios i* (Oxford, 1957), p. 497, suggests it was levied on ships going in either direction! On the 5 per cent tax see Kallet, 2001, 195–226, and, on the question whether the tribute was reimposed in 410, 223–5.
- 17 Krentz, 1989b, 105–6.
- 18 Lewis, 1977, 114 and n. 46. The authenticity of the peace offer is accepted by Kagan, 1987, 248–51, and by Rhodes, 1981, 245–6, among others. See Lewis, 1977, 126 for the importance the Spartans attached to recovering prisoners, and cf. Thucydides 5.15.1.
- 19 See Kagan, 1987, 248–51, where some of the proponents of the two views are listed.
- 20 See Rhodes, 1981, 414–15. Kagan, 1987, 253–7, suggests that divisiveness engendered by the debate on the peace offer was the immediate cause of the restoration.
- 21 Kagan, 1987, 262–3, connects this raid with the restoration of democracy, and accepts the arguments of W. J. McCoy, 'Thrasyllus', *AJP* 98 (1977), n. 49 on p. 276 for dating it to July 410.
- 22 For the problems see Krentz, 1989b, 11–14, though I do not accept his conclusions. In particular, Diodoros' statement (13.64.7) that the Athenians held Pylos for fifteen years is not a real obstacle to believing it was recaptured in 409. Diodoros' chronology is notoriously unreliable, and here he contradicts himself. He puts the capture in the archonship of Stratokles (425/4: 12.60.1 and 61ff. – it was in fact in that of Euthynos, 426/5), but then puts the recapture in the archonship of Diokles (409/8: 13.54.1).
- 23 See Kagan, 1987, n. 1 on 247; Krentz, 1989b, 11–12.
- 24 I agree with those who regard as interpolations the passages in our text of Xenophon which purport to date events by ephors, archons and Olympiads: see Krentz, 1989b, 108–10.
- 25 A. Andrewes, 'The generals in the Hellespont, 410–407 BC', *JHS* 73 (1953), pp. 2–9, but see Kagan, 1987, 265–70.
- 26 For a discussion of the topography and a sketch map see P. R. McKechnie and S. J. Kern, *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* (Warminster, 1988), pp. 118–21. See also Krentz, 1989b, 113–14.
- 27 The suggestion is Kagan's, 1987, 272.
- 28 Cf., e.g., the ill-feeling between 'eastern' and 'western' Union armies in the American Civil War: Shelby Foote, *The civil war ii* (London, 1992), pp. 842–3.
- 29 W. Leaf, *Strabo on the Troad* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 94.
- 30 I would not accept Hatzfeld's figure of 187 ships (1951, n. 4 on 281), though it is accepted by Kagan (1987, n. 1 on 277), since, despite Hatzfeld's own caveat about

- assuming that captured ships could be manned, his figures assume precisely that. So far from home, could the Athenians have manned more than thirty at most?
- 31 See M. Amit, 'Le traité de Chalcédoine entre Pharnabaze et les stratèges Athéniens', *AC* 42 (1973), pp. 436–57.
 - 32 Cf., e.g., Kagan, 1987, 280–1.
 - 33 See Krentz's note, 1989b, p. 121.
 - 34 On the question whether Boiotios had negotiated a fourth treaty see Lewis, 1977, 124–5; Cartledge, 1979, 266; R. Seager and C. J. Tuplin, 'The freedom of the Greeks of Asia', *JHS* 100 (1980), n. 36 on p. 144; Kagan, 1987, n. 28 on 334. One result of these various attempts to bring about a peace may have been the exchange of prisoners recorded by Androtion (*FGH* 324F44) in 408/7.
 - 35 Hatzfeld, 1951, 320 and n. 1.
 - 36 All this presupposes that Klearchos did go twice to Byzantion. This is denied by Krentz, 1989a, 16–17, who regards Xen., *Hell.* 1.1.36 as a 'doublet' of Thucydides 8.80.3. But, if so, it is a peculiar doublet: the only point of similarity is the involvement of Megarians in both.
 - 37 See, e.g., R. Meiggs, *The Athenian empire* (Oxford, 1972), p. 254, though he evidently saw no difficulty in believing that Alkibiades could collect such a sum – see p. 265; see also S. Hornblower, *Mausolus* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 5–8; Kagan, 1987, n. 69 on 309–10; Krentz, 1989b, 127. N. Robertson, 'The sequence of events in the Aegean in 408 and 407 BC', *Historia* 29 (1980), pp. 282–301, uses the sum to support his contention that Alkibiades spent an entire campaigning season in Karia.
 - 38 *Pace* Krentz, 1989b, 130.
 - 39 Andrewes, *HCT* v, p. 340.
 - 40 See Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 228, on Thucydides 6.8.2; Rhodes, 1981, 402. Krentz, 1989b, 132, cites Xenophon, *Anab.* 6.1.18 and 21 for a meaning more like 'commander-in-chief', but perhaps we should look to Athenian usage rather than Xenophon's.
 - 41 Probably the Athenians chose the colleagues Alkibiades wanted from the ten *stratēgoi*, as Krentz suggests (1989b, 128).

12 REARGUARD ACTION

- 1 Xenophon (1.4.21) says he left 'in the third month', but since he returned at the time of the Plynteria, which was celebrated either in the Attic month Thargelion or in Skirophonion, the 'third' month should be Hekatombeion or Metageitnion. However, as we saw, the Eleusinian procession took place in Boedromion, the month after Metageitnion. The text is often emended to either 'fourth' or 'fifth'.
- 2 On when and for how long navarchs were appointed see Sealey, 1976, 335–8; Andrewes, *HCT* v Addenda, pp. 454–5; Krentz, 1989b, 134.
- 3 See above, n. 34 to Chapter 8, on Gylippos.
- 4 Cartledge, 1987, 28–9.
- 5 See Krentz, 1989b, 125–6, but Cyrus' title was, surely, 'Karanos', not 'Karanon' – the latter is the accusative.
- 6 This seems a better explanation than that he wanted to woo Ephesos away from Persian influence, as H. Schaefer suggests in 'Alkibiades und Lysander in Ionien', *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* 4 (1949/50), pp. 301–2: see Lotze, 1964, 15 and 25.
- 7 Krentz, 1989b, 143–4, suggests Konon came from Naupaktos, where he had been in 414/13 and 411, but Xenophon says he was in Athens in spring 407, when elected *stratēgos* (1.4.10). In Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, he is repeatedly described as 'Phormio's son' (88, 114, 164), but his father's name was Timotheos.
- 8 Delebecque, 1964, 77, but see Krentz, 1989b, 138.
- 9 Kagan, 1987, 312–14. This strategy is more plausible than Amit's suggestion ('La

- campagne d'Ionie de 407/6 et la bataille de Notion', *Grazer Beiträge* 3 (1975), pp. 8–11) that the idea was to secure the Gulf of Smyrna and thus both sides of the Erythrai peninsula, before going on to attack Erythrai and Chios.
- 10 The best examination of this is Andrewes, 1982, 15–19. Kagan, 1987, 314–18, suggests Antiochos was trying to reproduce the tactics of Kyzikos, but this would have involved too serious a breach of Alkibiades' orders.
 - 11 This point is made by Kagan, 1987, 317–18.
 - 12 An even later source – Himerios 36.16 (Phot. Bibl. 377) – says Kleophon indicted Alkibiades. Kagan, 1987, n. 120 on 322, following J. T. Roberts, *Accountability in Athenian government* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1982), n. 62 on p. 224, and Fornara, 1971, 69–70, argues that Alkibiades must have been removed from command before the elections because Phanosthenes was sent to replace Konon (Xen. 1.5.18), and he was not one of the *stratēgoi* for 406/5. But this presupposes that he was one of the *stratēgoi* for 407/6, and Xenophon does not actually call him 'stratēgos': see Krentz, 1989b, 144.
 - 13 Cf. Gomme, *HCT* i, pp. 195–6; Hornblower, 1987, 149–51, and 1991, 347–9; Rhodes, 1998, 244–5; but see Cawkwell, 1997, 76–7.
 - 14 Cf., e.g., Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 1579; G. Glotz and R. Cohen, *Histoire Grecque* ii (Paris, 1929), p. 745; W. S. Ferguson, *CAH*¹ v, p. 354.
 - 15 Cf., e.g., Kagan, 1987, 323–4; P. A. Brunt, *Studies in Greek history and thought* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 20–1; D. M. Lewis, *CAH*² v, p. 497. Kagan goes so far as to suggest that the failure of Thrasybulos, son of Lykos, and Theramenes to be elected *stratēgoi* for 406/5 was 'perhaps . . . the most serious result of the Spartan victory at Notium'.
 - 16 For the view that desertion was responsible for the reduction in the size of the fleet see Kagan, 1987, 326–7; for the point about the selection of the best rowers see Krentz, 1989b, 136.
 - 17 Cf. Hatzfeld, 1951, n. 1 on 312; Lotze, 1964, 19–20 and 73; Bommelaer, 1981, 70–2; Kagan, 1987, n. 82 on 312.
 - 18 On the date see the references in n. 4 above.
 - 19 A view one cannot help but endorse, however unfortunate in the circumstances!
 - 20 Kagan, 1987, 329–30; Krentz, 1989b, 146, referring to his previous note on 137.
 - 21 Hardly all 28,000 sailors from the fleet, as Kagan seems to think (1987, 330). Kallikratidas could not possibly have made himself heard by so many, and the majority of his sailors would not have been Lakedaimonians. This does not alter the fact that it was a shrewd move to isolate Lysander's friends in a larger group, as Kagan observes.
 - 22 See Tuplin, 1986, n. 99 on 64, for other references. Tuplin, *op. cit.*, 62–4, accepts the emendation 'enemies' for 'citizens', and argues that the channel between the two harbours was not navigable and that the battle took place outside the smaller, southern harbour.
 - 23 Delebecque, 1964, 90.
 - 24 I fail to understand why Kagan (1987, n. 18 on 335) finds it hard to accept Diodoros' account. He does not mention the difficulties in Xenophon's text, for which see P. Krentz, 'Xenophon and Diodoros on the battle of Mytilene (406 BC)', *Ancient History Bulletin* 2 (1988), pp. 128–30.
 - 25 See Krentz, 1989b, 151–2, but he seems to have forgotten the two Thourian triremes Konon captured on his way to Samos (Xen. 1.5.19). My calculations also take into account that 22 were probably lost at Notion, as the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* (4.3) and Diodoros (13.71.4) say, not 15 as Xenophon says (1.5.14).
 - 26 Cf. the *Scholia* to *Frogs*, line 720, citing Hellanikos (*FGH* 323F26) and Philochoros (*FGH* 328F144).
 - 27 Krentz, 1989b, 152, seems to think these 'hippeis' – 'knights' is perhaps a better

- translation than 'horsemen' – would have served as oarsmen, but it is more likely that they would have served as marines. They came from the wealthiest families in Athens.
- 28 Krentz, *loc. cit.*, suggests Hellanikos 'may have depended solely on Aristophanes' rhetorical passage', but his further suggestion that 'slaves' ('*douloi*') might mean merely 'subjects of the Athenian empire' is far-fetched. When three contemporary pieces of evidence say that slaves fought at Arginousai, it is perverse to deny it. For slave oarsmen see Hunt, 1998, 83–101.
 - 29 As Krentz notes, *loc. cit.*, Kallikratidas could have had ten more ships if he had been able to man those captured from Diomedon, and Diodoros (13.97.3) gives him 140. But there is no good reason to doubt Xenophon here.
 - 30 See Krentz, 1989b, 152–3, on the difficulties of Xenophon's text here, though there can be little doubt that the Spartan fleet did spend the night at Cape Malea. The Athenian watch-fires could have been seen from Cape Malea, only some 9 miles (15 kilometres) away, but hardly from much further north. Kagan's 'about two miles' for the distance (1987, 340–1) is a mistake.
 - 31 For the *taxiarchoi* and *nauarchoi* see Jordan, 1975, 119–34.
 - 32 Kagan, 1987, 345, argues that the ships of the *nauarchoi* and the other allies were alongside those of the taxiarchs and Samians, but although '*epi*' can mean 'in addition to', as he says (n. 69 on 345–6), in *Hell.* 1.6.29 the meaning 'behind' surely follows from Xenophon's use of the verb '*epitassein*' to describe Perikles' position 'behind' Aristokrates, and Lysias' 'behind' Protomachos, in 1.6.29–30. If Xenophon had wanted to say that the ships of the *nauarchoi* and allies were alongside those of the Samians and taxiarchs, he would have used the preposition '*para*' or '*meta*', as again he does in 1.6.29–39 of the positions of Diomedes, the ten Samians and Thrasyillos.
 - 33 The view of Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 90–1, that the Athenian squadrons were arranged in line-ahead, and that the Spartan fleet was also in a number of squadrons in line-ahead, flies in the face of the evidence: ancient fleets fought in line-abeam – see Lazenby, 1987, 169–77.
 - 34 See C. Hignett, *Xerxes' invasion of Greece* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 393–6, as against J. S. Morrison and R. T. Williams, *Greek oared ships, 900–322 BC* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 138, and Kagan, 1987, n. 67 on 345, where 'Hannibal' is a mistake for 'Hasdrubal'.
 - 35 See, e.g., Kagan, 1987, 344–5, but cf. n. 32 above.
 - 36 Pace Ian Whitehead (1987), who, although a student of mine, was never quite able to convince me that the *periplous* was the manoeuvre whereby a ship, having broken through the enemy line, turned to attack its ships in the stern. Thucydides 7.36.4 surely implies that it was a manoeuvre whereby one line of ships in line-abeam outflanked another.
 - 37 See Krentz, 1989b, 154–5, as against Tuplin, 1986, 58–9, though Krentz's notion that the Athenians 'forced the Peloponnesians to open four flanks to attack' is too sophisticated, and is belied by the defensive nature of the Athenian formation.
 - 38 Krentz, 1989b, 168, apparently following Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, n. 1 on 1596, cf. Kagan, 1987, 353, suggests either that thirteen ships had broken up by the time the *stratêgoi* conferred, or that Xenophon intended to portray Euryptolemos as 'shading the facts to the generals' benefit', but neither explanation carries conviction. Xenophon uses parts of the same verb '*apollusthai*' ('to destroy') both of the 25 ships (1.6.34) and of the 12 (1.7.30).
 - 39 The usual emendation is 'Lysias', but although a 'Lysias' was one of the *stratêgoi*, according to Xenophon, he puts him on the right, behind Protomachos (1.6.30). If Kallikratidas did ram a *stratêgos*' ship in the Athenian front line, before falling foul of Perikles, it would have been that of Aristokrates.

- 40 All the suggestions are Kagan's, 1987, 346–51.
- 41 I do not propose to discuss the trial of the generals: see Krentz, 1989b, 259, and Kagan, 1987, 354–75, and references in both.
- 42 See Richard Overy, *Russia's war* (London, 1997), pp. 25–33.
- 43 Cf. Overy, *op. cit.*, p. 32: 'The most debilitating effect of the purges was the sharp change they signalled in the balance of power between the military and the politicians.'
- 44 The historicity of the peace is rejected by Rhodes, 1981, 424–5, but defended by Kagan, 1987, 376–9.

13 ENDGAME

- 1 See above, n. 4 to Chapter 11.
- 2 Pace Kagan, 1987, 382.
- 3 Kagan, 1987, 384.
- 4 The tradition is rejected by, e.g., Beloch, GG, ii. 2, 1423–4, and Busolt, GG, iii. 2, 1617, but defended by, e.g., P. A. Rahe, 'Lysander and the Spartan settlement, 407–403 BC' (Diss., Yale, 1977), pp. 80–2, and Kagan, 1987, 364–5. The former suggests Lysander wanted to display his power, the latter that he wanted to lure the Athenians back to Attica.
- 5 Kagan, 1987, 384.
- 6 See, e.g., Tom Pocock, *Horatio Nelson* (London, 1987), pp. 155–67 and 302–32.
- 7 See Bommelaer, 1981, 111–13, and B. S. Strauss, 'A note on the topography and tactics of the battle of Aegospotami', *AJP* 108 (1987), pp. 741–5.
- 8 Cf. Bommelaer, 1981, 112; Strauss, 1983, 28; Kagan, 1987, 386–8.
- 9 Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 264.
- 10 Some have doubted this detail – e.g. Krentz, 1989b, 176 – on the grounds that a five-day delay is a commonplace. But history is littered with coincidences, and all that matters is that there was a delay. If Xenophon says it lasted four days, so be it.
- 11 See, e.g., Lotze, 1964, 32–7; C. Ehrhart, 'Xenophon and Diodorus on Aegospotami', *Phoenix* 24 (1970), pp. 225–8; Bommelaer, 1981, 101–15; Strauss, 1983, 24–30; Kagan, 1987, 391–3. As Krentz says, 1989b, 178, Diodoros' version 'is not demonstrably superior to Xenophon's'.
- 12 See Jim Bradbury, *The medieval archer* (Woodbridge, 1985), p. 132 and n. 46.
- 13 On the massacre see Krentz, 1989b, 180, and Kagan, 1987, 394–5 and n. 67, with references in both. For contrary arguments see Strauss, 1983, 32–4.
- 14 Krentz, 1989b, 179, suggests 'the confusion may . . . reflect real uncertainty about the pirate's roots'.
- 15 Morrison, Coates and Rankov, 2000, 105, calculate this to mean an average speed of just over 8 knots, but assume that Theopompos 'must have started fairly late on the first day', i.e. presumably the day of the battle. If, however, he started fairly early the next day and arrived late on the third, his average speed would have been a more reasonable 6½ knots.
- 16 As noted by Krentz, 1982, 30.
- 17 Lotze, 1964, 40, suggests Agis and Lysander may have wanted to remove Pausanias from Attica, but this is not necessary.
- 18 R. Merkelbach and H. C. Youtie, *ZPE* 2 (1968), pp. 161–9. For discussions of the papyrus' reliability see Krentz, 1989b, 185–6, and references there.
- 19 For full discussions of these questions and other points connected with the making of the peace see, e.g., Hamilton, 1979, 44–55; Krentz, 1982, 34–43; Kagan, 1987, 402–11.
- 20 Krentz, 1982, 36–41, suggests that Theramenes' secret was that he had learned that the king of Persia was gravely ill, but his further suggestion that Theramenes waited

- so long on Samos in the hope that the king would die and Lysander thus lose his paymaster is less plausible.
- 21 See n. 18 above.
 - 22 See the references in Krentz, 1982, n. 21 on 36.
 - 23 For speculation along these lines see, e.g., Busolt, *GG*, iii. 2, 1631.
 - 24 This is presumably the same man as the 'Erianthes' who appeared on the victory monument, according to Pausanias (10.9.9), though unfortunately the first part of the name is missing in the surviving inscription (ML 95d): the last letters are 'θιος' ('thios').
 - 25 It is defended by Hamilton, 1979, 50–2, though even he admits that 'it is hard to explain how Agis and Lysander would have dared to introduce such a proposal in defiance of their own state'. His solution – that the proposal was made on an earlier occasion – is more ingenious than convincing. He also believes the Polyainos anecdote.
 - 26 E.g. Kagan, 1987, n. 133 on 410.
 - 27 Cf. Rhodes, 1981, 427.
 - 28 See Lazenby, 1978, 229–30.
 - 29 But see Krentz, 1982, n. 35 on 43.
 - 30 For the date the war began see Hornblower, 1991, 237–8.
 - 31 A modern parallel might be the notorious headline 'Gotcha!' in early editions of the *Sun* for 4 May 1982, referring to the sinking of the *General Belgrano*, though it was changed in later editions.

14 CONCLUSIONS

- 1 For the Spartans see Lazenby, 1985, 5–11, with 41–5. Thucydides' figures for the Athenians, particularly the figure of 16,000 for reserves and metics, have caused difficulties, but most commentators are agreed that the figures themselves are accurate, however one is to interpret them – cf. Gomme, *HCT* ii, pp. 33–9; Rhodes, 1988, 196–7 and Appendix, 271–7; Hornblower, 1991, 255–7. Although the Athenians could and did make use of troops from allied states (see Cawkwell, 1997, Appendix III, 115–20), these will not have been as numerous as those of Sparta's allies.
- 2 Pace Dover, *HCT* iv, p. 248, who does not seem to appreciate this.
- 3 See Andrewes' detailed breakdown of the ship numbers in *HCT* v, pp. 27–32.
- 4 As Churchill famously said he would ask Roosevelt in his radio broadcast of 9 February 1941.
- 5 John Colville, *The fringes of power: Downing Street diaries 1939–1955* (London, 1985), p. 404.
- 6 Lewis, 1977, 124–5.
- 7 Cf. Andrewes, 'Two notes on Lysander', *Phoenix* 25 (1971), pp. 206–26; P. Funke, *Homonia und Arche* (Wiesbaden, 1980), n. 15 on p. 31; but for a contrary view see Hamilton, 1979, 128–9.

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INDEX

[Note: numbers in bold refer to the maps]

- Abarnis 243
 Abdera 37, 220
 Abydos 187–8, **195**, 196–200, 202–3, 207, 211, 214; battle of 200–1, 207
 Academy, the 223
 Achaia, Achaians 2, 17, **60**, 73–4, 111, 155
 Acharnai, Acharnians 35, **60**
 Acheloös, river 63
 Adeimantos 216, 220, 242–4
 Aegean, the 2, 8, 14, 20, 59, 130, 172, 174, 180, 185, 187–8, 191, 194, 201, 210, 217
 Aelian 224
 Agesandridas 192, 214
Agidai, the 224
 Agis II 6, 7, 114–21, 123, 125, 171–4, 181, 186, 191, 207, 223, 239–40, 245–8
 Agis IV 6
 Agraioi **63**, 65–6, 87
 Agrinion 44
 Aigina, Aiginetans **1**, 16, 17, 21, 23, 27, 29, 31, 37, **60**, 84, 111, 126, 192, 230, 252.
 Aigion **60**, 61
 Aigospotamoi **195**; b. of 10, 176, 221, 241–4, 255; location of 240–1
 Ainos
 Aiolis, Aiolians (in Asia Minor) **1**, 53
 Aiolis (in Greece) 62
 Aitolia, Aitolian **60**, 61–2, 76
 Akanthos, Akanthians 91–2, **92**, 95, 107
 Akarnania, Akarnanians **1**, 2, 10, 17, 44–6, 48, **60**, 61–6, **63**, 87, 154, 161
 Akragas 131, **137**, 159
 Akrai **137**, 163; ‘Akraian rock’ 163–4
 Akritas peninsula 36
 Albania 22
 Alesion Mt 119
 Alexikles 192
 Alkamenes 173–4
 Alkibiades 10, 27, 109–12, 117, 127, 129, 132–40, 144–5, 149, 153, 168, 173–6, 178–9, 181, 184–5, 189–93, 199–206, 210–24, 229, 241–4, 252–3
 Alkidas 51, 53, 56–7
 Alkiphron 115–17
 Alope 37
 Ambrakia, Ambrakiots **1**, 2, 24, 44, 56, **60**, 62–6, **63**, 152; gulf of 62, **63**
 Amisos 17
 Amorges 172, 176, 178, 184
 Amphiloichian Argos, Amphiloichia, Amphiloichians **60**, 62–5, **63**
 Amphipolis **1**, 17, 25, **92**, 92–4, 98, 100–1, **102**, 103–8, 110, 135
 Anaia 53, **175**, 176
 Anakeion, the 192
anakrousis 161
 Anaktorion, Anaktorians 2, 25, 44, **60**, 66, 107
 Anapos, river 142–3, 146, **147**, 148, 157, 160, 163
anastrophe 47
 Anaxagoras 30
 Andokides 172, 202, 207, 244
 Androkates, shrine of 52
 Andros, Andrians **1**, 15, 79, 146, 218–20, 222, 224, 244
 Antandros 83, **175**, 181, 199, 206, 213–14, 217, 237, 254–6
 Antiochos 219–21
 Antirrion 45–7, **60**, 62

- Antissa 51, 53, **175**, 177
 Antisthenes 181–2, 187
 Anytos 211, 253
 Aphrodite 132
 Aphroditia 84
 Apollo 29, 47, 49, 87, 90.
 Arabia 201
 Arakos 237
 Arcadia, Arcadians 3, 10, 21, 54, **60**,
 100, 108, 111, 113–15, 117–18,
 121–2, 125–7, 153, 252
 Archelaos 201–2, 229
 archers 10, 13, 15, 50, 54, 62–3, 72,
 75–6, 78, 84, 99, 136, 1411, 153–4,
 157, 161, 194, 200, 229; mounted
 146
 Arcestratos 246
 Archidamos (II) 3, 6–7, 10–11, 27–8, 31,
 33–5, 41, 91, 253–4
 Arcturus, rising of 42
 Argilos, Argilians **92**, 93, 101, **102**, 107
 Arginos 180
 Arginousai **175**, 196, 230, 232, 234; b.
 of 208, 230–5, **231**, 253, 255
 Argos, Argives, Argolid **1**, 2, 21, 28, 36,
 39, 41, **60**, 79, 89, 106, 108–23,
 125–30, 136, 143, 148, 153–4, 170,
 177–8, 212, 252–3
 Aristarchos 194
 Aristeus 26–7, 41
 Aristogenes 230
 Aristokrates 216, 220, 230, 233
 Ariston 156
 Aristonymos 96
 Aristophanes 19, 20, 35, 37, 39, 55,
 58–9, 80, 84, 144, 171, 223, 230, 244
 Aristotle 4, 6–8, 171.
 Arktonnesos peninsula 199, **204**
 Arnai 93
 Arrhabaios 92, 97
 Arrianoi 197
 Arsakes 199
 Artake **204**, 204
 Artas 154
 Artaxerxes (II) 41
 Artemis 199
 Artemision, b. of 26, 45, 231
 Asia Minor 1, 14, 53, 172, 180–1,
 183–4, 213, 218, 235, 239–40, 256
 Asine (in Lakonia) 84
 Asine (in Messenia) **1**, 72, 146
 Asopios 51
 Asopos, river 33
 Aspasia 30
 Aspendos 190–1
 Assinaros, river 165
 Astakos 37, 48, **60**
 Astyochos 176–82, 184, 188–90
 Atalante 37, 107–8
 Atarneus **175**, 209
 Athena 102, 146; Athena Nike 66;
 Athena Polias 215
 Athens, Athenians **1**, **60**, *passim*; army
 and navy 12; constitution 11–12;
 empire 14; financial problems 41, 43,
 51, 81, 201, 212, 219, 222, 224, 229,
 253; strategy 32, 37–8, 55, 57–8, 79,
 81, 82, 205
 Athos, Mt **92**, 94, 101, 199
 Atramyttion **195**, 199
 Attica 5, 11, 19, 21, 26, 31–6, 38–9, 42,
 49, 51–2, 59, 67, 70, 79, 88, 106–7,
 135, 145–6, 153, 159, 170–2, 186,
 211, 239–40, 245, 253
 Aulon 93
 baggage-carriers 90, 142–3, 163
 Battos 80
 Bithynia, Bithynians 212
 Bizantia 224
 Black Sea 17–18, 49, 172, 207, 235, 254
 Boiotia, Boiotians 2, 4, 15, 17, 32–5, 43,
 60, 61, 85–90, 106–9, 114–16, 153,
 158, 182, 186, 194, 201, 207,
 213–14, 223, 225, 232–5, 252;
 Boiotian league 2, 32–3, 88
 Boiotios 213
 Bolbe, lake 93
 Boliskos **175**, 177
 Bormiskos **92**, 93
 Bosporos **195**, 206, 212, 214,
 Bottiaia, Bottiaians 26–7, 43
 Boudoron 48, 55, 58
 Brasidas 8, 10, 36, 46–7, 56–7, 59, 72,
 86, 91–104, 106, 108, 121, 171, 193,
 254
Brasideioi 121, 123, 125–6
 Brilessos (= Pentelikon) 35
 Byzantion, Byzantines 1, **1**, 5, 181, 189,
 195, 198, 205–7, 212–15, 217, 224,
 235, 244–5, 253
 Carthage, Carthaginians 84, 145, 159,
 164, 210, 231, 249
 cavalry 10, 26, 34–5, 38–9, 43–4, 49,
 79–80, 84–90, 100, 104, 110,

- 114–16, 121–2, 125, 139–44, 146–7,
149–52, 154, 156–8, 160, 162, 164,
167–8, 177, 208–9, 211–13, 223, 230
- Ceramic Gulf *see* Keramos, Gulf of
- Chaireas 190; possibly the same man
203, 205
- Chaironeia **60**, 87
- Chalke **175**, 183, 185–6
- Chalkedon **1**, **195**, 205–7, 211–14, 235,
244–5, 253
- Chalkideus 173–7, 180
- Chalkidike, Chalkidians **1**, 25–7, 38,
40–1, 43–4, 61, 91–3, 95–8, 101,
104, 108, 171
- Chalkis **1**, **60**, 193, 201
- Chaonia, Chaonians 44–5
- Charikles 153–4
- Charminos 182
- Charoiades 57, 59
- Chersonese, Chersonesians **195**, 196–7,
202, 212, 214, 222, 224
- Chios, Chians **1**, 2, 14, 39, 49, 53, 72,
81, 99, 136, 153, 172–4, **175**,
176–81, 185–8, 195–6, 206–7,
209–10, 217–18, 225–6, 228, 232–5,
237–40, 253, 255.
- Choirades islands 154
- Chromon 62
- Chrysopolis **195**, 206, 211–12
- Churchill 256
- ‘circle’, the 145–8, **147**, 150–1, 157,
166–7
- Constitution of the Athenians (AP)* 12, 171,
188, 207, 235, 249
- Corinth, Corinthians **1**, 2–4, 7, 11,
16–29, 37–8, 41, 45, 47, 58, **60**, 66,
79–80, 82, 86, 90–1, 106–8, 110–12,
114, 126, 129–30, 136, 145, 152–6,
164–5, 173–4, 179, 188, 239, 244,
248, 252–4; constitution of 4; gulf of
19, 40–1, 44–5, 48, 111, 173; isthmus
of 28, 31, 33–4, 51, 59, 79, 173
- Crete, Cretans **1**, 15, 46, 48, 56, 58,
136, 181
- Cyprus 243, 252
- Cyrus 4, 205, 213, 217–19, 225, 227,
237–8, 254–6
- Darius II 186, 217
- Dardanos 197, 200
- Daskon 142, **147**, 160
- Deiniadas 177, 206
- Dekeleia 7, 35, 38–9, **60**, 145–6, 153,
157, 170–2, 181, 191–2, 194, 207,
210–11, 215–6, 235, 245–6, 251,
253
- Delion **60**, 87–91; b. of 88–91, 92, 106
- Delos **1**, 14, 53, **175**, 189
- Delphi **1**, 3, 29, 62, 243–4
- Delphinion 180–1, 185, 187, 225–6, 239
- Demophantos, decree of 207
- Demosthenes (the general) 59, 61, 63–9,
71–2, 75–8, 85, 87–8, 144, 152–5,
157, 159–67, 170
- Demosthenes (the orator) 239, 243
- Derdas 25
- Derkyllidas 187, 199
- Dieitrephes 188
- diekplous* 13, 45, 47, 155, 161, 230–1,
233
- Diochares Gate 207
- Diodoros 12, 17, 33, 40, 88, 104, 106,
122, 125, 128, 131, 149, 159, 163,
191, 196–8, 199–250 *passim*, 252,
253–6
- Diodotos 54
- Diomedon 177, 230
- Diomelos 146
- Dion **92**, 94, 108, 135
- Dionysos, theatres of 192, 223
- Dioskouroi 94, 192
- Dipaieis (Dipaia), b. of 21
- Diphilos 155
- Dodecanese 14
- Dodona 47
- Dorieus 190, 200, 224
- Doris **60**, Dorians, Doric dialect 30, 57,
61, 127, 131, 151, 158–9, 248,
269–70n62
- Douris of Samos 215
- Dryoskephalai pass 52
- earthquakes 59, 110, 173, 182
- Eëtionēia 191–2
- Egesta, Egestaians 58, 131–2, 134, **137**,
138–41, 145, 147, 166, 168
- Egypt 58, 83, 135, 180, 191, 201, 252
- Eiön 41, **92**, 93–4, 101, **102**, 103–4, 225
- Elaious **195**, 196–7, 222, 227
- Eleusis 34–5, **60**, 216–17
- Elis, Eleians **1**, 21, 36–7, 40–1, 46, **60**,
106–10, 114, 116–18, 126–7, 154,
251–3
- Ellomenos 61
- Embaton 53
- Endios 173–4, 206–7

- Enyalios 85
 Epameinondas 90, 104
 Ephesos **1**, 53, **175**, 176, 199, 207–9,
 217–20, 225, 237–8, 240, 255
 ephor, ephors 5–7, 108, 145, 173–4,
 206, 246, 261nn16–17
 Epidamnos **1**, 22
 Epidauros, Epidauria, Epidaurians [Map
 2]14, 36, 39, 111–12, 114–15, 126–7,
 174, 192, 252
 Epidauros Limera **1**, 84, 170
epibates ('vice-admiral') 8, 197
 Epipolai 145–50, **147**, 157–8, 160, 167
epistoleus ('vice-admiral') 8
 Epitadas 77–8
 Erasinides 229–30
 Eresos 51, 54, **175**, 177, 196, 202
 Eretria **1**, **60**, 186, 192–3, 199, 201
 Erianthos 248
 Erineon (or Erineos, in Achaia) **60**, 155
 Erineos, river (in Sicily) 164–5
 Erythrai, Erythraians **1**, 53–4, 172–4,
175, 175–9
 Eryx 132, **137**
 Eteonikos 188, 206, 234–5, 237, 242–3,
 245
 Etruria, Etruscans 145, 148, 160
 Eualas 177
 Euboia, Euboians **1**, 34–5, 37, 50, 59,
60, 170–2, 186–7, 190, 192–3, 199,
 201, 233–5
 Eukles 93–4
 Euktemon 215
 Eumachos 206
 Eupalion **60**, 61–2
 Euripides 74, 100, 197, 223
 Euripos 37, 186, 192, 201
 Euryelos 146, **147**, 150, 158
 Eurylochos 62, 64
 Eurymedon (Athenian general) 12, 57,
 61, 67, 69–71, 81, 84, 130, 152–5,
 157, 159–60
 Eurymedon, river 190
 Eurypontid(s) 217, 224
 Euryptolemos 215, 233
 Euthydemus 161
 Evander 37

 fireships 160, 167
 Five Hundred, Council of 11–12,
 109–10, 188, 190, 207, 246
 Five Thousand, the 188, 190–3, 207,
 216

 Four Hundred, the 188, 190–3, 202,
 206, 218, 244, 246
 Frontinus 203–4, 243

 Galepsos **92**, 94, 101
 Gaurion 218–19
 Gela 84, 131, **137**, 149, 154, 163
 Gelon 138
 Geraistos, cape 50, **60**
 Geraneia, Geraneian hills 19, 86
 Gialová **68**, 73
 Glauke 189
 Golden Horn 214
 Gongylos 149–50, 167, 193
 Gordion 213
 Grand Harbour (at Syracuse) 139, 142,
 146–51, **147**, 153, 155, 160, 166–7,
 178
 Granikos, river 199, **204**
 Gylippos 8, 144–6, 148–53, 156,
 158–61, 164–5, 167, 193, 217, 224
 Gytheion 84, 215, 217, 253

 Hagnon 40, 105
 Hairai 176
 Halieis 39, **60**, 81, 252
 Halikarnassos **175**, 182, 199
hamhippoi 14
 Hannibal 64, 85, 249
 Harpagion 199
 Hasdrubal 164
 Helixos 189, 213–14
 Hellanikos 230
Hellenika Oxyrhynchia 4, 33, 39, 187–8,
 209, 219–21
 Hellespont 17, 83, 172–3, 181, 183, 187,
 189–90, 193–6, **195**, 200–1, 203,
 206–10, 214–15, 217–18, 220, 229,
 238–41, 254
 Heloros **137**, 142, 164
 Helos **1**, 84
 helots 5, 11, 29, 41, 57, 69, 71, 74, 77,
 79, 91, 106–7, 113, 121, 153, 170,
 175, 251; helot revolt 21, 41, 68, 79,
 84, 91, 107
 Heraia, Heraians 121
 Herakleia Pontika 17
 Herakleia Trachinia 59, **60**, 62, 64, 91,
 105, 110, 171, 254, 268–9n46
 Herakleides of Mylasa 231
 Herakles 6, 119, 120, 162, 212, 217
 Hermatous 196
 Hermes 135

- Hermione 36, 39, **60**
Hermokrates 144–5, 147–8, 153, 162,
178, 190, 197, 206, 212
Hermon 231
herms 136, 140
Herodotos 5, 8, 21, 35, 41–2, 45, 77, 89,
111, 213, 231, 251–2
Hestiodoros 43
Himera, Himeraians **137**, 140, 149
Hippagrtetas 78
hippeis (Athenian cavalry) 229–30,
289–90n27
Hippeis (élite Spartan unit) 8, 122, 125,
273n20
Hippeus 230
Hippias 54
Hippokrates (Athenian general) 85,
87–90
Hippokrates (Sparta commander) 180,
205, 212
Hipponikos 61
Hitler 256
Homer 88
hoplites *passim*, but see especially 9–10,
26, 43–4, 77, 80, 89–90, 98, 100,
103–4, 122–3, 126, 143, 147, 150,
158, 261n26
horse transports 39, 79, 116, 137
‘Hundred Isles’, the 226
Hybla **137**, 146
Hykkara **137**, 140
Hylas, river 155
hypomeiones (‘inferiors’) 5
Hysiai **60**, 129

Ialysos **175**, 183
Iapygian promontory 137
Iasos **1**, **175**, 178, 184, 238–40, 244; gulf
of 178
Ida, mt 83
Idakos 197
Idomene **63**, 65–6, 159
Ikaros **1**, 53, **175**, 189, 195
Ilion **195**, 200
Illyria, Illyrians 97
Imbros, Imbrians **1**, 15, 50, 75–6, **195**,
196, 249
Ionia, Ionians, Ionic dialect **1**, 30, 53,
151, 172, 176–7, 181, 185, 190, 193,
199, 208–10, 214, 219–20, 222, 225,
239–40, 254; Ionian revolt 231;
Ionian sea 137, 149
Isagoras 245

Isokrates 5
Isthmian festival 173
Isthmus, the *see* under Corinth
Istone, mt 57, 67, 81
Italy, Italiots 17–18, 31, 57, 67, 131,
137, 139, 145, 152, 154, 166, 168,
253–4

javelineers *see* missile-armed troops
Justin 203, 206

Kakyparis, river 163–4
Kallias, decrees of 23
Kallias, Peace of 185
Kallikratidas 224–8, 230–4, 237–9,
254–5
Kalloni, gulf of 234
Kamarina, Kamarinans 57, 84, 131, **137**,
139–40, 145, 154, 163
Kameiros **175**, 183–4
Kardamyle **175**, 177
Kardia **195**, 202
Karteria 196
Karyai **60**, 112
Kastolos 218
Katana 57, **137**, 139–42, 145–6, 159–61,
163, 165–6
Karia, Karians **1**, 41, 172, 202, 215, 238
Karystos, Karystians 15, 79–80
Kaulonia 154
Kaunos 181–2, 186
Kedreiai 238–40, 244
Keloussa, mt 115
Kenchreai **60**, 79–80, 173, 176
Kentoripa **137**, 146
Kephallenia, Kephallenians **1**, 37, 40, 44,
60, 61, 77, 154
Kephissos, river (in Attica) 35
Keramos, gulf of 215, 239
Kerdyllion 101–2
Kerkyra, Kerkyraians **1**, 2, 14, 16–19,
22–5, 30, 32, 36, 44, 56–8, 61, 67,
69–70, 81, 84, 134, 136, 154, 201,
254
Kithairon, mt 52
Klaros 53 **175**
Klazomenai **1**, 174, **175**, 176–7, 179,
202, 219, 255
Kleainetos 54
Kleandridas 146
Klearchos 173, 181, 189, 195, 198, 205,
213–15, 217, 230
Klearidas 100–2, 104–5, 107

- Kleomedes 255
 Kleomenes I 2
 Kleomenes III 6
 Kleon 11, 15, 54, 57, 73–5, 78, 81, 96,
 101–4, 106–8, 113, 135
 Kleonai, Kleonaians 121–2, 126
 Kleophon 207, 235, 246, 249
 Kleroi **204**, 204
 Knemos 45–7
 Knidos **1**, **175**, 180, 182–4, 187, 199
 Koiratadas 214–5
 Kolophon 54, **175**, 176, 209, 219
 Komon 78
 Konon 154, 219–20, 222, 224, 226–30,
 234, 242–3, 255
 Koressos 209
 Koroneia, b. of 17.
 Koronta 48
 Korykos, cape 174, **175**, 179–80
 Koryphasion (see also under Pylos) 67,
 211
 Kos **1**, **175**, 182–3, 185, 199, 217, 219,
 255
 Kos Meropis 182
 Kotyrta 84.
 Kranai 37, **60**
 Kratesippidas 206, 209, 217
 Kratippos 136
 Krenai 62–3, **63**
 Krioneri 45
 Kritias 216
 Krommyon 79, 81
 Kroton **137**, 137, 155
 Krousis 43
 Ktesias 217
 Kydonia 46
 Kyllene 45, 56, 70
 Kyme, Kymaians **1**, **175**, 177, 179, 222,
 233
 Kynossema **195**, 197; b. of 197–202,
 254–5
 Kynouria 252
 Kythera, Kytherians **1**, 83–4, 107–8,
 252
 Kytinion **60**, 61
 Kyzikos, Kyzikenes **195**, 198, 202, 206;
 b. of 134, 203–10, **204**, 213–14, 217,
 224, 235, 253–4
 Labdalon 146, **147**, 150
 Laches 57, 59, 109, 130–1, 140
 Lade 176
 Lakedaimon, Lakedaimonians (see also
 under Spartans) 2, 5, 9, 11, 39, 83,
 117, 225, 260n3
 Lakonia, Lakonians 116, 154, 170,
 173–5, 192, 206–7, 218, 252
 Lamachos 132, 138–9, 141, 148, 216
 Lampsakos 187–8, **195**, 210–11, 239–43,
 245, 255
 Laodokeion 100
 Las 192
 Laureion 39
 Lebedos **175**, 176
 Lekton, cape **175**, **195**, 196.
 Lekythos 95
 Lemnos, Lemnians **1**, 15, 50, 75–6, **175**,
 196, 249
 Leon (Athenian general) 177
 Leon (in Sicily) 146
 Leon (Spartan commander) 187
 Leontinoi, Leontinines 18, 57, 131–2,
137, 138–9
 Leotychidas 174
 Lepreon 5, 107–8, 110, 118, 127
 Leros **175**, 178
 Lesbos, Lesbians **1**, 2, 14, 39, 49–51,
 53–6, 172–3, **175**, 177, 179–81, 186,
 195–6, 202, 209–10, 218, 222, 226,
 230, 235–6, 239, 245
 lesser harbour (at Syracuse) **147**, 149–51,
 153, 167–8
 Leukas, Leukadians **1**, 2, 37, 44, 46–7,
 56–7, **60**, 61–2, 70, 148–9, 152
 Leukimme, cape 22, 57
 Leukonion 177
 Leuktra, b. of 88, 90, 110, 253
 Leuktra (in the Peloponnese) 111
 Libya 58, 83, 159
 Lichas 182–4, 187, 190, 254, 256
 light troops (see also missile-armed
 troops) 43, 61, 64, 75, 78, 84–90, 94,
 97–9, 103, 121, 137, 140–1, 143,
 149–50, 156, 163, 208
 Lindos **175**, 183
 Lokris, Lokrians (Eastern or Opountian)
2, 2, 17, 37, 61, 90, 108
 Lokris, Lokrians (Western or Ozolian) 2,
 61–2
 Lokroi 57, 59, 131, 137, **137** 149, 155
 ‘long walls’ (at Patrai) 111, 129; (at
 Argos) 128; (at Athens) 244, 246–9,
 256; (at Megara) 85–6
 Lydia 208–9
 Lykeion 207.
 Lykophron 80

- Lykourgos (Spartan lawgiver) 5, 7
 Lynkos, Lynkestians **92**, 92, 97–8, 100, 103
 Lysander 4, 8, 10, 205, 217–22, 224–5, 237–48, 250, 254–6
 Lysias (Athenian general) 230, 233
 Lysias (author) 222, 242–3, 246–9
 Lysimeleia marsh 142, **147**, 160
- Macedonia, Macedonians **1**, 10, 17, 25–6, 37, 44, 48, 91–2, **92**, 97–8, 100–1, 127, 135, 201, 229
 Mainalon, Mainalia, Mainalians 114, 118, 121
 Malea, cape (in Lakonia) **1**, 83, 181, 211
 Malea, cape (on Lesbos) 230
 Malis 90; gulf of 171
 Mantinea, Mantineians **2**, 3, 21, 64–5, 100, 108–10, 112, 114, 117–23, **119**, 125–7, 136, 143, 251–3; battle of 8, 9, 89–90, 112–13, **119**, 120–8, **124**, 170; 2nd battle of 104.
 Mantitheos 202
 Marathon, b. of 43
 Massiliots 231
 Medokos 241
 Megalopolis 118
 Megara, Megarians, Megarid **1**, 2, 16–21, 23–4, 29, 32, 38, 47–8, 55–6, 58, **60**, 74, 79, 85–7, 91, 106–8, 114–16, 137, 164, 189, 21–11, 213–14, 231, 252; Megarian decree 18–19, 22–3, 25, 29, 31
 Megara Hyblaia **137**, 138, 145–6
 Meidios, river 197
 Meleas 50, 206
 Melesippos 34
 Melos, Melians **1**, 59, 61, 129–30, 181–2, 244, 257; Melian dialogue 129
 Menander 157, 161
 Menandros 243
 Mende, Mendaïans **92**, 96–7, 99–100
 Menedaios 64
 mercenaries 15, 64, 75–6, 83, 91, 97, 99, 177–8, 181, 185, 205.
 Messana **137**, 138–9, 144, 149
 Messapia, Messapians 154
 Messenia, Messenians **2**, 21, 36, 41, 48, 61, 64–5, 67–9, 71, 76, 78–9, 107–8, 113, 154, 211, 253
 Messina, straits of 140, 149
 Metapontion 154
 Metauros, b. of the 164
- Methana **60**, 81–2, 107–8, 252
 Methone (in Messenia) **1**, 36–7
 Methydriion **60**, 114
 Methymna, Methymnaïans 50–1, 55, 172, **175**, 177, 196, 198, 202, 209, 226, 234
 metics 14, 230
 Metropolis **63**, 63
 Miletos, Milesians **1**, 14, 79, 83, **175**, 176–81, 183–4, 186–90, 195, 199, 207–9, 217–18, 225, 238, 244
 Mindaros 190, 194–8, 200, 202–5
 Minoa 55, 58, 85, 166, 252
 missile-armed troops (see also archers, light troops, slingers) 26, 44, 61–2, 64, 77–8, 90, 93, 153–7, 161, 200
 Molykreion 62
mothax 217, 224
 Mounychia 192
 Mykale peninsula **175**, 189
 Myndos, Myndian 244, 255
 Myonessos, cape 53, **175**
 Myrkinos, Myrkinians **92**, 94, 104
 Mysteries, the 136, 140, 216–7
 Mytilene, Mytileneans **1**, 4, 42, 49–55, 83, **175**, 177, 196, 226–30, 234–5, 245, 254, 257
- Napoleon 115, 233
 Napoleonic Wars 13, 121
 Naupaktos **1**, 2, 40–1, 44–8, 56, 58, **60**, 61–2, 68, 71–2, 77, 87, 111, 152–4
 ‘Nausios’ 233
 Naxos (in Sicily) 57, **137**, 139, 144–5
 Nelson 104, 240
 Nemea 114–15
 Nemea, the, b. of 88–9, 122
neodamôdeis 5, 108, 121, 125–6, 213
 Neonteichos 224
 Nepos 207, 222, 224
 Nikias 4, 55, 57, 59, 61, 75, 79, 83, 85, 99, 106–7, 109–10, 132–6, 138–41, 144, 148–52, 154, 156–7, 159, 161–5, 167–8, 216, 235; peace of 4, 37, 101, 106–8, 252
 Nikostratos 56, 99
 Nile, b. of the 240
 Nisaia 17, 47–8, 55, 58, **60**, 73–4, 85–6, 91, 106–7, 211, 252
 Notion 54, **175**, 209, 213, 219, 221, 239; b. of 220, 222–5, 255
 Nymphodoros 37–8

- Oineion 61–2
 Oiniadai 44, **60**, 66, 87
 Oinoe 32, 34, 194
 Oisyme (= Syme?) **92**, 94
 Olpai 62–6, **63**
 Olympia 3, 50; Olympic Games 50–1, 110–11
 Olympieion 142, 144–5, **147**, 151, 156–7, 167
 Olynthos, Olynthians 26–7, 43, **92**, 97, 101, 107
 Oneion, mt 80
 Onugnathos 170
 Orchomenos (in Arcadia) **60**, 113, 117–18
 Orchomenos (in Boiotia) **60**, 87
 Oreoi **60**, 193, 201, 207
 Orestheion 118
 Oresthis 100
 Orneai, Orneates 121–2, 126, 129
 Ornoi 224
 Oropos 35, **60**, 61, 90, 170, 186–7, 192, 207, 235.
 Ortygia **147**, 149
- Paches 51, 53–4
 Pagondas 88–90
 Paktye 224
 Palairians 37
 Panakton 106, 108–10
 Pangaion, mt 17
 Panopeus (Phanotis) **60**, 87
 Panormos 46
 Paralia 38
Paralos 53, 56, 190, 242–4
 Parion **195**, 203
 Parnes, mt 90
 Paros 201, 215
 Pasion or Pasiphon 209
 Pasitелidas 100–1
 Passipidas 206, 209, 214, 217
 Patmos 54, **175**.
 Patrai 45, **60**, 111, 129, 137
 Pausanias (author) 7, 78, 120, 129, 221, 243–4, 255
 Pausanias (king of Sparta) 224, 245–6
 Pausanias (regent of Sparta) 29
 Pedaritos 178–81, 185
 Pegai 17, 58, **60**, 73–4, 85
 Peiraieus 13, 36, 38–9, 47–8, 70, 168, 171, 181, 189, 191–3, 210, 215, 229, 235, 245, 248, 250
 Peiraios 174, 176
- Peisander 184–5
 Pelagos wood **119**, 120
 Pellene, Pellenaians (in Achaia) 2, 11, **60**, 114–15
 Pellene (in Chalkidike) 25, 94, 96
 Peloponnese, Peloponnesians *passim*;
 Peloponnesian league 2–3
 peltasts 10, 15, 43, 75–6, 88, 94, 97, 99, 101, 104, 208–9, 213
 Pentelikos, mt 35
 Perdikkas 25–6, 37, 44, 91–2, 97–8, 100–1, 127, 135, 202
 Perikles 3–4, 9–10, 12–13, 17, 29–33, 35, 38–41, 43, 54, 74, 152; strategy of 32, 34, 37–9, 48, 55, 57, 74, 251, 253
 Perikles (son of above) 230, 232–3, 236, 238, 241
 Perinthos **195**, 206
perioikos (-oi) 5, 9, 11, 39, 50, 59, 64, 70, 83, 173, 177, 206, 213, 251
periplus 13, 155, 231–2
 Persia, Persians 3, 31, 41, 43, 45, 53, 139, 172, 174, 176, 179–80, 182–5, 206, 211–13, 218–19, 224, 248, 254–6; Persian Wars 14, 16, 18, 20–1, 255–6; treaties with Sparta 176, 180, 183, 186
 Phanai 177
 Phanomachos 43
 Pharax 125
 Pharnabazos 172, 181, 183, 186–7, 189, 198–202, 204–6, 211–13, 217–18, 222, 238, 254–6
 Pharnakes 186
 Phaselis 14
 Pheia 36–7, **60**, 154
 Pheidias 30
phidition (-tia) 4, 9.
 Philip (brother of Perdikkas) 25
 Philip II (of Spain) 168
 Philochoros 136, 207
 Philokles 242, 244
 Phleious, Phleisians **60**, 86, 113–15, 129–30
 Phoenicia 252; Phoenician fleet 184, 189–91, 194, 199, 201
 Phoinikos 180
 Phokaia **175**, 177, 179, 196, 219–20, 232
 Phokis, Phokians 2, **60**, 61, 87, 159, 248
 Phormio 27, 41, 44–7, 51, 56
 Phrygia (in Attica) 35
 Phrynichos 178, 184, 188, 192

- Phrynīs 173, 206
 Phylarchos 217
 Pierion 105
 Pissouthnes 54
 Plataia, Plataians 1, 1, 2, 32–4, **60**, 85,
 87, 91, 106, 170, 230; b. of 5, 21, 43,
 52, 77, 251–2; breakout from 51–2;
 fate of 55–6; siege of 34, 42–3, 166
 Plato 27, 90, 229
 Pleistoanax 59, 106, 126, 225
 Plemmyrion **147**, 151, 153–4, 167
 Plutarch 5–7, 12, 17, 30, 37, 40, 129,
 132–3, 140, 159, 164, 171, 199–250
 passim, 255
 Plynteria 215
 Polichna 46
 Pollis 41
 Polyainos 248
 Polyanthes 155
 Polybios 85, 164
 Polydamidas 97, 99
 Polyzelos, estate of 164
 Poseidon 29, 99
 Poteidaia **1**, 16–18, 22, 25–32, 40–4, **92**,
 96, 99–100, 107, 166, 254
 Prasiai (in Attica) 192
 Prasiai (in Peloponnese) 39, **60**, 170,
 192, 252
 Priapos **195**, 199
 Prokles 59, 62
 Prokonnesos **195**, 203–4, **204**, 206
 Propontis 14, **195**, 198, 203, 206, 212
 Proschion 62–3
 Prote 69, 72
 Proteas 36
 Protesilaos 196
 Protomachos 230, 232
proxenoi ('consuls') 109, 115–16, 127,
 189
 Pteleon (in Asia Minor) 179
 Pteleon (in Greece) 107–8
 Ptoiodoros 87
 Pydna 26, **92**, 202
 Pygela **175**, 208–9.
 Pylos **1**, 10, 13, 15, 36, 67–71, **68**, 74–5,
 77, 79, 82, 84, 107–9, 112, 130,
 207, 211, 251, 253
 Pyrrha 51–2, 54, **175**, 234
 Pythian Games 100
 Pythodoros 12, 59, 84

 Red Army, the 235
 Regulus 164

 reserves 143, 273n20
 Rhamnous 34
 Rhegion 18, 57, 59, **137**, 137–40, 149,
 155
 Rheitoi 34
 Rhion 45–6, **60**, 111
 Rhodes, Rhodians **1**, 15, 137, **175**
 183–7, 190, 195, 200, 207, 217, 219,
 224–5, 235, 239–40, 255
 Rhoiteion 83, **195**, 196, 200
 Rhype 155
 Rome, Romans 145, 166
 Royal Navy (British) 13

 Sacred Band, the 88
 Sadokos 41
 Salaithos 52–4
Salamina 53, 56, 140
 Salamis **1**, 47–8, 51, 55, **60**, 192, 239;
 b. of 26
 Samos, Samians **1**, 2, 14, 17–21, 28, 49,
 53, 174, **175**, 176–91, 193, 195–6,
 201–2, 208, 215, 218–19, 221–2,
 224–5, 229–30, 234, 245–7, 255
 Sane **92**, 94
 Sardis **175**, 202, 217–18, 225
 Saronic gulf **60**, 79, 81, 113, 173
 sea power (see also under triremes) 13,
 31–2, 37, 44, 50–1, 58, 66, 79, 81–3,
 112, 134, 171–3
 security, lack of 50, 79, 203
 Selinous, Selinountines 131–2, 134, **137**,
 138, 140–1, 149, 159, 168, 178, 209
 Sellasia **60**, 246–7
 Selymbria, Selymbrians **195**, 206,
 213–14, 224
 Sestos 188, **195**, 196–204, 210, 224,
 240–2, 245
 Seuthes 241
 Sicily, Sicilians 1, 4–5, 18, 31, 36, 57–8,
 67, 70, 81, 84, 108, 130–69 *passim*,
 137, 170–1, 198, 210–11, 248,
 253–4; Sicilian expedition 3, 10, 13,
 15, 30, 39, 53, 113, 131–69 *passim*,
 223, 253
 siege-engines (*mêchanai*) 34, 39–40, 42,
 55, 72, 91, 95, 100–1, 113, 148,
 157, 166; siege techniques 42–3,
 166
 Sigeion **195**, 196
 signals 27, 48, 52, 57, 80, 94, 193, 196,
 201, 204, 213, 227, 242, 252
 Sikanos 159

- Sikels 138, 140, 142, 145–50, 154,
163–4, 166
- Sikyon, Sikyonians **1**, 3, 22, 58, **60**,
86–7, 111, 114–16, 127, 153, 252–3
- Siphai **60**, 87
- Sitalkes 37–8, 41
- Sithonia, promontory of 94
- Skandeia 83
- Skione **92**, 96–7, 99–101, 107–8, 135,
257
- Skiritai 122–3, 125–6
- Skolos 107
- Skyros 249
- slingers 15, 44, 90, 137, 141, 153–4
- Smyrna, gulf of **175**, 220
- Sokrates 27, 90, 211
- Sollion 37, **60**, 107
- Solygeia 79–80
- Sophokles (general) 16, 67, 69–71, 81,
84
- Sophokles (playwright) 171
- Sosylos 231
- Sounion, cape 38, **60**, 170, 192
- Sparta, Spartans, *Spartiatiai* (see also
Lakedaimon, Lakedaimonians) *passim*,
260n3; constitution 4–8; army 8–10;
strategy 31, 59, 91.
- Spartolos 43–4, 61, **92**, 107
- Sphakteria 9–10, 13, **68**, 71–2, 74, 79,
84, 91, 96, 106–7, 109, 126
- square, hollow 97–8, 103, 141–3, 163
- Stagiros **92**, 92, 101, 107
- Stalin 235
- Sthenelaidas 7, 27–8
- Strabo 137, 197, 201, 240
- Stratos, Stratians 44–5, 48, **60**
- Strombichides 174, 176, 187, 189
- Strymon, river 17, 41, **92**, 92–4, **102**;
gulf of 93
- Styphon 78
- Sybaris, river 155
- Sybota, b. of 19, 24–5, 57, 161, 230
- Syke 146
- Symaithos, river 142
- Syme **175**, 182, 184
- Syracuse, Syracusans 30, 57, 131–69
passim, **137**, **147**, 178, 180, 190, 193,
197, 200, 204, 206, 209–10, 212–13,
248; siege of 13, 42, 131–69 *passim*
- Tainaron, cape **1**, 29
- Tanagra, Tanagrans **60**, 61 87–8; b. of
19, 21
- Tamos 190–1
- Taras 137, 149, 154
- Tarentum (= Taras) 85
- Taÿgetos, mt. 108
- Tegea, Tegeates 3, 21, **60**, 100, 108,
113–14, 118, 120–1, 123, 125–6,
128
- Teichion 61
- Teichioussa 178
- Teisamenos 21
- Teleutias 168
- Temenites 144, **147**, 148, 166
- Tempe 8
- Tenedos 49, 53–4
- Teos 174, **175**, 176, 225–6
- Terias, river 139
- Tetloussa **175**, 182
- Thapsos **137**, 146, 148, 159
- Thasos **1**, 21, 26, 28, **92**, 93–4, 188, 206,
215, 218, 220
- Thebes, Thebans **1**, 32–3, 50, 52, 56, **60**,
61, 87–90, 170, 223, 248
- Theomachares 192
- Theopompos (the historian) 17
- Theopompos ('the pirate') 244, 255
- Thera 59
- Theramenes 191–2, 201–2, 204–6,
210–11, 213–14, 232, 234, 246–7,
249
- Therimenes 178–80
- Therma 26, **92**
- Thermopylai pass 59; b. of 78, 89
- Thespiei, Thespians **60**, 87, 89, 154
- Thessaly, Thessalians 35, 91, 100, 105
- Thirty Tyrants 216, 248
- Thirty Years Peace 2, 17, 19, 28–9, 73;
between Sparta and Argos 106
- Thorax 226, 243
- Thorikos 192
- Thoudippos 81
- Thouria, Thourians 17, 134, 137, **137**,
140, 149, 154–5, 180, 190, 224
- Thrace, Thraceward region, Thracians
10, 17, 26, 28, 37, 41, 43, 48, 59, 86,
91, 100–1, 107–8, 127, 135, 171,
174, 188, 202, 210–11, 213–15, 217,
220, 224, 241, 245, 254
- Thrasondas 232
- Thrasyboulos (son of Lykos) 196–8, 200,
202–5, 210–11, 215–16, 219–23,
232, 234
- Thrasyboulos (son of Thraso) 222
- Thrasykles 174, 176

INDEX

- Thrasylos (of Argos) 115–17
- Thrasyl(l)os (of Athens) 195, 197, 200–1, 207–12, 214–16, 219, 230, 232, 235, 253
- Thrasymelidas 72
- Thriasian plain 34
- Thronion 37, **60**
- Thucydides *passim*; as general 93–4
- Thyrea 37, 84
- Thyssos **92**, 108, 135
- timber 154, 202
- Timolaos 188
- Tissaphernes 172–4, 177–8, 180–6, 189–91, 194, 199, 201–2, 206, 208–9, 218–19, 224, 238, 255–6
- Torone **92**, 94–6, 99–101, 107, 257
- Trafalgar, b. of 243
- Trebbia, b. of 64
- Triopion, cape **175**, 180, 186
- Tripodiskos 86
- triremes *passim*, but see especially 3–4, 12, 155, 192, 196; battle tactics 45–7, 155, 157, 161–2, 200, 227; cost of 3, 14; limitations of 12–13, 24, 44, 55–6, 149, 152, 157, 184; oarsmen 3, 12, 174–5, 224
- Troad, the 196
- Trogilos **147**, 147, 167
- Troy 200
- Trozen 17, 36, 39, **60**, 73–4, 81, 108, 252
- Tydeus 243
- Voidokilia bay **68**, 69
- Xanthippos 164
- Xenophantidas 206
- Xenophon (Athenian general) 43
- Xenophon (the author) 4–9, 12–13, 39, 43, 80, 89, 104, 111, 121–2, 127, 141, 168, 171, 181, 187–9, 199–250 *passim*, 253–6
- Xerxes 172
- Zakynthos, Zakynthians **1**, 2, 40, 44, **60**, 61, 70, 72, 77, 154
- Zama, b. of 249
- Zeus 6